

# History

Answers and commentaries

A-level (7042)

## **2S The Making of Modern Britain, 1951 — 2007**

Marked answers from students for questions from the June 2022 exams. Supporting commentary is provided to help you understand how marks are awarded and how students can improve performance.

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## Answers and commentaries

Please note that these responses have been reproduced exactly as they were written by the student.

This resource is to be used alongside the A-level History Component 2S The Making of Modern Britain, 1951-2007 June 2022 Question paper and inserts.

### Question 1

With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying the impact of the Suez crisis.

**[30 marks]**

### Mark scheme

- L5:** Shows a very good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with a strong awareness of the historical context to present a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. The answer will convey a substantiated judgement. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. **25–30**
- L4:** Shows a good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with an awareness of the historical context to provide a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. Judgements may, however, be partial or limited in substantiation. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. **19–24**
- L3:** Shows some understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance together with some awareness of the historical context. There may, however, be some imbalance in the degree of breadth and depth of comment offered on all three sources and the analysis may not be fully convincing. The answer will make some attempt to consider the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. **13–18**
- L2:** The answer will be partial. It may, for example, provide some comment on the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question but only address one or two of the sources, or focus exclusively on content (or provenance), or it may consider all three sources but fail to address the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. **7–12**

A-LEVEL HISTORY – 7042 – 2S THE MAKING OF MODERN BRITAIN – ANSWERS AND COMMENTARIES

**L1:** The answer will offer some comment on the value of at least one source in relation to the purpose given in the question but the response will be limited and may be partially inaccurate. Comments are likely to be unsupported, vague or generalist. The response demonstrates limited understanding of context. **1–6**

Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

## Student responses

### Response A

Source A is valuable to some extent as it is an editorial from the Observer, a broadsheet newspaper, and therefore a respectable and trustworthy source. It was also published as the crisis of Suez was unfolding; Israel invaded Egypt in late October 1956 and Britain and France responded in early November, adding value to the source as it displays the immediate and short term impact of Suez. Additionally, the apologetic tone further adds value as it gives an insight into the impact on the public, emphasising the government's betrayal which is evident in its actions against the United Nations, which had warned Britain not to get involved. Furthermore, the source claims 'the Eden Administration no longer has the nation's confidence', adding value to the source as Eden resigned the following year in 1957, citing 'ill health', yet the damage to his reputation as an 'international statesman' was apparent.

However, the source is limited in the fact that it states 'The Conservative Party faces electoral destruction', limiting the source as the 1959 election saw Macmillan increase the Conservative majority to 100 seats in their largest post-war victory. This detracts value as it suggests that the Suez crisis in 1956 did not impact conservative electoral performance, especially 'electoral destruction' as the source claims.

Overall, despite overestimating the impact of Suez on electorate, Source A is mostly valuable as it originates from a crucial time period during the Suez crisis and capitalises on the devastating effect on Eden's administration.

Source B is highly valuable because it is a private letter, suggesting that it is honest as it was not meant for the public and therefore not tainted by persuasion or exaggeration. Additionally, the source was written by Anthony Eden in 1956, something incredibly valuable regarding his position as Prime Minister, granting him insider knowledge, and decision making role in the Suez crisis, that of which experienced the consequences of firsthand. The source reveals a motivation to work closer with Europe, adding value to the source as Britain applies to join the European Economic Community in 1960. There is also value in Eden's emphasis on the vital 'timing and conviction of our approach', perhaps a reason as to why Britain decided not to join the EEC in 1957 and therefore adding value to Eden's perception in the source.

On the other hand, the source is limited in its value as it suggests 'we must re-evaluate our defence commitments', something not evident in the government's approach to nuclear weaponry post 1956. The Conservative government continued the commitment to nuclear defence; their first atomic bomb test in 1952 was developed but the first hydrogen bomb test in 1957, displaying a continuation in defence commitments and limiting the source. Arguably, Britain's delusion about its world power status remained, evident in the abandonment of its independent deterrent Blue Streak in 1960 due to economic costs. This limits the source as Britain did not entirely 're-evaluate' their defence commitments to nuclear weaponry.

Over all, the source is highly valuable because of its confidentiality and examination of the consequences of Suez on Britain's defence policy.

Source C is valuable to some extent because it emphasises the dominating power of the United States and suggests that Britain underwent a 'moment of truth' as a result of Suez. This is particularly valuable as the United States heavily opposed the invasion of Suez and imposed economic sanctions on Britain to force their withdrawal. The pressure placed on Britain exposed their dependence on the US, highlighting the weaknesses of the British economy independently. Additionally, the source is valuable as it suggests Suez destroyed Britain's 'nostalgia for a past imperial greatness', something evident in the accelerated decolonisation under Macmillan. His 'winds of change' speech in 1960 signalled a significant shift in policy, further supported by the independence of 21 countries 1957-64, including Nigeria in 1960. This adds value to the source as the acceleration of decolonisation suggest that the Suez crisis had a significant impact on international policy.

However, the source is severely limited as it is written by a Labour MP, perhaps resentful of the 13 years of Conservative dominance and the constant divisions that foreign policy, particularly Europe, had caused in the Labour party. Additionally, as the source was published in 1964, it has a wide view of the impact of Suez, yet this hindsight limits the source as it most likely considers other factors of conservative failures and strengths post 1956 and suggests that Suez had 'no electoral impact,' perhaps underestimating its impact.

Overall, the source is mostly valuable as it assesses the impact of Suez on the special relationship and Britain's realisations following the humiliating embarrassment, supported by the acceleration of decolonisation.

### **This is a Level 3 response**

The answer is very typical of a Level 3 response: it addresses all three sources and all key evaluative components – provenance, content and judgement. However, there is some imbalance in the scope and depth of comment and supporting detail offered for each source. For example, the evaluation of provenance is reasonable for 'A' but is rather basic for both 'B' and 'C'. The judgements offered for all three sources were limited in substantiation.

## Response B

Source A is valuable in regards to studying the impact of Suez as it was written in November of 1956, and Eden's troops had mobilised in October, therefore the article would be extremely pertinent. It also took a left leaning view at the time and therefore would likely be more inclined to be critical of Eden and therefore address the negative impacts of Suez. The tone is apologetic to the reader, due to its passed coverage, but also shows clear disdain towards the Eden administration. This implies that it is concerned its readers trust and opinion, which likely means it reflects the public's opinion over the Suez crisis, source A addresses how the public no longer has faith in the government and states the dishonesty within the government. This is supported as despite Eden initially being a popular Prime Minister, overseeing a great increase of the majority in the 1955 election after Churchill's resignation, Eden's opinion polls plummeted, and in January 1957. Therefore this source is reasonably useful in representing the public's view of the Suez crisis and the mistrust in the government which followed.

What limits source A's value is that due to its topical nature, it is unable to address any long term impacts of which the Suez crisis had. Furthermore, it states that the Conservative Party faces electoral destruction, yet after Eden's resignation in 1957, Macmillan won the 1959 election with an even larger majority of 100. Therefore this demonstrates Source A's limits as it perhaps overestimates the future impacts of Suez Crises and is therefore limited in value in regards to an historian studying the Suez crisis.

Overall, due to its provenance and its condemnation of the government it is useful in demonstrating public opinion towards Suez, and despite initial support of Eden, it highlights an aftermath of distrust and outrage.

Source B is useful to an historian studying the Suez crisis as it is a private letter from the Prime Minister Eden, and therefore offers great insight into Eden's perspective of the immediate aftermath. Source B's tone is arguably optimistic in its outlook of the aftermath, stressing how its 'revealed realities'. This demonstrates how the Suez crisis changed politicians outlook on foreign policy, it argues for a review in domestic capacity, the need for work with Europe and the importance of the commonwealth. This is valuable as it demonstrates the Suez crisis' role in the withdrawal from East of Suez, Macmillan's winds of change speech in 1960 in South Africa in which he highlighted a need for an increase in pace in decolonisation. But also in regards to Macmillan's attempt to join the EEC in 1963. Furthermore, one of the reasons Britain was rejected was due to De Gaulle's suspicions over Britain loyalties as they wanted exception like in the case of New Zealand lamb. Therefore this source is extremely valuable in demonstrating the Suez crisis impact on later Conservative foreign policy.

However, Source B is limited in value, as it is a private letter from Eden to his ministers, it is undoubtedly partisan, and not necessarily that useful as a source as it would largely be an attempt to try preserve Eden's political career and legacy amongst the Conservative party, Furthermore it argues how the Suez crisis has highlighted needs of change in foreign policy, yet many areas such as the Mau Mau rebellion in 1952 and later failures in Britain's EFTA would have also been instrumental in conservative's policy change. Therefore it is limited due to the fact that the letter is more focused on possible positives of Suez it negates many facts,

and overplays much of the positives, as later change in policy was likely related to many other factors rather than only Suez.

Overall, whilst the letter clearly negates public outrage, both national and international and so is evidently partisan. It nonetheless is valuable as it demonstrates the change in the foreign policy of the conservative party.

Source C is valuable to an historian as its written by a Labour MP in May 1964, eight years after. It is therefore likely to provide critical insight and analyse it with hindsight and the consideration of longer term effects. Its tone is relatively neutral in nature and informative. Whilst the source does address the immediate outrage the Suez crisis caused, specifically it also addresses the long term impacts, and international impacts. It highlights the USA's impact and power which was demonstrated in its refusal to compensate Britain when Saudi Arabia issued an oil embargo. USA dominance can also be seen later in the 1962 Cuban missile crisis in which Thornycroft described Britain as 'by-standers'. It also addresses the change in imperial policy which can be seen in the granting of independence to Cyprus and Nigeria, Sierra Leone and in 1963 to Kenya. Therefore this source is valuable to an historian studying the impact of Suez as it addresses not only public outrage initially, but also how it affected the Conservative party's change in foreign policy.

What limits Source C's value is that it perhaps downplays it, later describing it as a 'non-issue' in political party terms and states its minimal impact. Whilst this seems to be true in regards to Macmillan's victory it can be argued that it fuelled an anti-establishment sentiment that came into play in Alec Douglas-Home's election loss in May 1964, when this periodical was published. Furthermore, as it remains relatively neutral it does not give great insight into the Labour party's views and the impact it had on them.

Overall source C is largely valuable to an historian studying the Suez crisis impact in terms of its role in international politics and policy.

### **This is a Level 5 response**

The answer shows a very good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance. It demonstrates conceptual understanding throughout, sustaining balanced analysis and displaying an excellent grasp of historical context, evident in the deployment of precise and accurate knowledge to interrogate the content of all three sources to reach substantiated judgements on their value. It is well expressed, comprehensive and competent in all respects.



### Question 3

'Privatisation and Right to Buy, in the years 1979 to 1987, were highly successful social and economic policies.'

Assess the validity of this view.

**[25 marks]**

### Mark scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information, which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way, although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

## Response A

The statement that privatisation and the right to buy scheme were highly successful social and economic policies is only partially valid. In reality, both policies led to some social and economic improvements, whilst simultaneously creating long-term social and economic difficulties.

Privatisation regarding society was only superficially successful. Industries such as water (1989) and transport were privatised unnecessarily for short-term profit for Thatcher's government. The supply-side economic principle of increased competition leading to better service didn't apply to industries providing basic human needs. Thus an October 1990 poll showed that 83% of respondents disapproved of Thatcher's privatisation of water, representing a social failure. However, it may be considered a success in that privatisation of any industry results in reduced taxes as the public no longer has to subsidise the industry. Yet, privatisation leads to increased competition which leads to varying prices as different corporations compete to make the most profit out of the industry. As aforementioned, increased competition in the water and transport industries was perhaps more damaging than beneficial to society, as it meant that citizens were placed at the mercy of competing profiteering corporations with a monopoly on basic human necessities. Therefore, privatisation regarding society represents only superficial success.

Privatisation from the perspective of the economy similarly resulted in mixed success. It was very damaging to the economy in the long term as it made less money available to future governments. Macmillan, then Earl of Stockton, referred to this in the Lords as 'selling off the family silver'. Yet, it may be considered an economic success in that its implementation was successful, as for example BT was privatised in 1984, whilst British gas was privatised in 1986. The privatisation during Thatcher's 1<sup>st</sup> term of 1979-1983, including British Petroleum in 1979, alone results in a net gain of £1.76 billion which could then be spent on the economy. However, the fact that privatisation led to many industries becoming foreign-owned, sometimes resulting in a lower quality service, certainly represents a weakening of the British economy. Again, this demonstrates that privatisation was only a short-term fix for the economy, and that it actually caused long-term difficulties. Therefore, privatisation regarding the economy can only be said to have resulted in mixed success.

The Right to Buy scheme, implemented by the Housing Act of 1980, can also be said to have only resulted in partial success regarding society. In a similar fashion to privatisation, allowing council house tenants to buy their house at a 33-50% discount was only beneficial in the short term, whilst it actually resulted in long term difficulties with the housing market. As by 1988, 2 million had used the scheme to buy their house, this resulted in a long term council house shortage. In the 1980s, many councils were forced to house people in less suitable accommodation such as B&Bs, which were often more expensive than council rent, This clearly represents a failure as it actually resulted in a housing shortage. Yet, the scheme could be said to have increased social mobility, allowing the often poor council house tenants to buy their homes, thus allowing them to become more 'middle class' homeowners, no longer reliant on the 'dead hand of the state' to provide them with housing. However, considering that difficulties in today's housing market may be linked back to the consequences of this

scheme, the extent of social mobility increasing in the long term is clearly limited. Therefore, the Right to Buy scheme regarding society was only a partial success.

Lastly, the Right to Buy scheme was certainly not a complete success regarding the economy, but rather only a mixed success. It was clearly beneficial in that its implementation was successful, allowing 2m people by 1988 to buy their house using the scheme, suggesting that this economic policy was effectively carried out, and that it represented a significant short-term economic improvement regarding homeownership. However, this success may be limited in that high levels of homeownership may not be an encouraging indicator of economic success, as it suggests that the economy is incapable of supporting the most financially deprived with council housing. This may link to Thatcher's disgust at the concept of the 'nanny state', suggesting that the Right to Buy scheme was perhaps harmful to the economic provisions to the poor by the British government. Yet, it is clear that greater levels of economic mobility were achieved through the scheme, as those who bought their homes no longer had to pay rent to the council. Nevertheless, as aforementioned, this isn't always a positive indicator of wider economic success. Therefore the scheme achieved only partial success.

In conclusion, considering the impacts of both privatisation and the right to buy scheme on both society and the economy, it would be completely unreasonable to suggest that they were 'highly successful' policies. Both did achieve some level of success, such as short-term increased social mobility and short-term money provisions for the government, both caused harmful long-term effects such as lower quality service and a housing shortage. Yet, in both cases, implementation between 1979-1987 was largely a success. The problem lies in the long term consequences of these supply-side policies which placed the interests of the government before the needs of the people.

### **This is a Level 5 response**

This is a highly conceptual and effectively balanced answer leading to a convincing, well-substantiated judgement. The precise supporting information on both Privatisation and Right to Buy is very succinctly delivered, and critical insights are evident throughout. The organisation of the answer is simple but effective. The candidate's high level of understanding is demonstrated not only by a very good grasp of detail, but also by the ability to link this to Thatcher's broader, overarching goals.

## Question 4

'In the years 1997 to 2007, no Conservative leader was able to heal the party's divisions.'

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

## Mark scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information, which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way, although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

## Student responses

### Response A

While it is safe to say that the Conservative Party in the years 1997 to 2007 was not comparable to Labour, it is harsh to say that no Conservative leader was able to heal the Party's divisions. The succession of Michael Howard by David Cameron led to the party being the most unified it had been since the early 90's and was the foundation to making the Conservatives electorally successful.

In the earlier years from 1997 to 2007, it can be argued that the statement is correct. The polarity between Hague and Blair was significant and Hagues attempts to appeal to the public did more harm than good. His attempts to appear as modern by bragging that he was drinking as a teenager were feeble attempts at increasing his appeal, this was further worsened by the fact that he was backed by Margaret Thatcher, who in the eyes of many was the opposite of modernisation. Hagues successors Howard and Duncan Smith also achieved little success. Ian Duncan Smith was seen as quite charismatic but many of his decisions divided the party. His decision of backing Blair in the Iran war was a controversial decision as the war was very unpopular with the public, he also clashed with the modernisers in the party, this is most likely what caused the Conservatives to be electorally unsuccessful because instead of healing the party divisions, he was dividing them further. Finally Michael Howard was seen as an improvement to the previous leaders but he was still no match for Blair. The party remained divided as Howard again was backed by Thatcher which divided the traditional Conservatives and the modernisers, All of this shows that the Conservatives had no chance of being elected as the divisions between the modernisers and the traditional Conservatives has widened by the incompetence of their leaders.

However, it is not the case that no Conservative leader was able to heal the party's divisions. After the unpopularity of the Conservative manifesto Howard said that he wanted to be succeeded by a moderniser and was replaced by David Cameron. David Cameron was seen as comparable to Blair in the fact that he was likeable to the public. He was a moderniser and under him the party became the most unified it had been since the early 1990s. He was unlike the previous leaders in the fact that he wanted to modernise the party. He was supportive of the LGBT community and single mothers and as such had a high appeal to the working class. These factors show that the structure of the party had changed and the party's divisions had almost been completely healed, giving them a chance to be electorally successful.

Overall it can be deduced that whilst the Conservative party was very divided for the majority of the period 1997-2007, the succession of Howard by Cameron meant that the party was modernised and therefore it can be said that David Cameron was able to heal the party's divisions.

**This is a Level 3 response**

The answer shows an understanding of the question but it lacks the depth of detailed contextual support and range of development associated with higher levels. It does provide a good deal of comment in relation to the question but it leans in part to generalised assertion about the competence of the party's leaders. The final judgement, that Cameron was able to heal all the party's divisions, is not fully convincing.

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