

# A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/1F Industrialisation and the people: Britain, c1783–1885  
Report on the Examination

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7042  
June 2022

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Version: 1.0

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## General

There were some excellent responses to all of the questions. Students generally had reasonable contextual knowledge of the period. Many students were able to use examples of key events and developments to support their answers. The majority of students were also well prepared to approach the questions with a structured answer that focused on the main concept of the question. Most students reached judgements in their answer to the essay questions, usually in the concluding paragraph. However, the judgements did not always have clear support to justify the judgement being made.

## Question 1

The majority of students were able to understand the main arguments of the extracts, and many students offered evaluative comments using contextual knowledge. The overall standard of response to this question was good. There was some very impressive knowledge of the attitudes and actions of the leading individuals amongst the Tories in the 1820s.

Extract A argued that the Tories were able to resist all demands for reform from 1812 until about 1827, when the splintering of the party weakened their ability to prevent reform. Many students focused on the main argument about the resistance to reform, and were able to support or counter this with valid examples. However, when considering the argument about the changing situation from 1827, some students became focused on the detail of the events of the splits in the Tory faction, rather than the argument as it related to Tory attitudes to reform.

Extract B argued that the Tory government became more willing to reform from 1818/19, but that they struggled to understand and handle the complex problems that they were facing. It further argues that the Tory leadership was willing to adapt to the realities of the time. For many students, this was the best evaluated extract; for example, many used knowledge such as the large protests of 1818/19 or the introduction of legislation such as the 1819 Factory Act to evaluate whether the Tories could be said to have little accurate information about the problems in society. One area of weakness was where students evaluated the argument that the Tory leadership was willing to adapt to realities. In this instance, many used Peel, who was mentioned in the extract, but selected knowledge from his second ministry of 1841-1846 which was irrelevant.

Extract C argued that the Tories were concerned with economic reform, but remained opposed to social and political reform through to 1832. Although they focused on the needs of the landed elite, the extract further argues that the Tories did alleviate some social problems to avoid alienating the working classes. As with the previous extracts, many students were able to identify and evaluate these arguments. Students generally showed a good understanding of the Corn Laws and other Tory financial policies, and this understanding was deployed well in evaluation. Some students struggled to draw upon knowledge to evaluate the argument about the Tory attitude to reform in relation to the 1832 Great Reform Act.

## Question 2

This question was a very popular option, perhaps because it covered a topic which had been covered early in the course, and there were many very good Level 5 responses. Almost all students had a reasonable or good awareness of the challenges faced by British governments, and many were able to consider analytically, how successfully governments handled them. Commonly,

students considered the radical demand for parliamentary reform, the challenges in Ireland and the political influence of the French Revolution. Some students also made valid links to political challenges posed by other issues like party splits, royal patronage, or the Abolitionist movement. However, some students focused more on describing the challenges faced, such as the nature of the radical challenge in Britain, rather than analysing the success of the government's response to the challenge. Additionally, some students did not focus on political challenges, but rather wrote about all challenges. For example, many wrote in detail about the economic problems and the Sinking Fund, without making a link to how this was a political challenge for Pitt and his government, or they described the problems in the war on the Continent without making the link to the criticism that prime ministers faced over their war strategy.

### **Question 3**

The majority of students who attempted this question showed a good range of contextual knowledge of issues which affected working people. Commonly, students were aware of working and living conditions, the Poor Law Amendment and factory legislation. The majority of answers showed at least some balance and reached some judgement on the issues. There were some very good arguments presented which assessed the impact of the Poor Law on the lives of working people, and many students were aware of specific examples from the period like the repeal of the Corn Laws or the development of early trade unions. Where students chose to consider public health, for example the work of Chadwick and the Public Health Act 1848, they tended to be less clear on how far this actually affected the lives of working people across Britain by 1851 and often over-emphasised the improvements that were made in this area. One area of overall weakness in many responses was to include developments with no direct impact on the lives of working people. For example, many students described the failure of the 1832 Great Reform Act to enfranchise the working classes or the lack of progress made by the Chartists in achieving their political goals, without making any link to the effects, or lack of, on the lives of working people.

### **Question 4**

Most students had a reasonable understanding of the role of the railway network in supporting economic growth. There was some very impressive factual recall of statistics relating to the railroads and other industries. As well as considering the railroads, most students offered a structured answer and had other factors to consider in the process of creating a balanced answer. The majority of students had examples to draw on from the period 1840 to 1873, like Peel's financial legislation. A minority of answers did rely on generalised knowledge of the economy which could have been describing almost any point in 1873-1870. What set apart stronger answers was the ability to focus analytically on the concept of the question. These answers considered the relative significance of the railroad network as a cause of economic growth, rather than simply explaining a range of factors which led to economic growth.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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