
A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/1J

Report on the Examination

7042

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General

Many of the students sitting this paper had clearly revised and prepared very thoroughly. There was some impressive subject knowledge displayed. Some students, having used the Advanced Information to guide their revision, did stray from the focus of the questions in a desire to use what they had learned. However, many answers were confident and students made good attempts to engage with a range of material, as well as providing more specific detail. It is worth remembering that essay questions are always based upon the six key questions outlined in the specification and will also seek to test from a range of concepts: change, continuity, cause, consequence, similarity, difference and significance. To this end, there are no set question stems for essays at A Level and students need to prepare for a range of different question types, rather than producing pre-prepared responses.

Question 1

It was pleasing to see that most students were able to identify the main interpretation in all three extracts. Student responses were stronger than those previously seen on this area of the specification, and most students were able to use a range of contextual knowledge. They were not required to compare the given extracts, nor evaluate their provenance and bias. Those that did this wasted valuable time, although they were not penalised for so doing. The answer did not require an introduction –nor an overall conclusion, but some concluding judgement on each extract in relation to the question posed was helpful to meet the criteria for the highest marks. The most obvious differentiator between student answers to this question lay in the ability to identify and address the overall argument raised by each extract. Some students adopted a line by line approach, which neither showed any overall understanding, nor kept the answer focused on the question's demands.

Some students did struggle with extract B, because overall they became bogged down in the final phrase, and the impact the Empire had on colonised peoples. Many students took a successful approach of identifying the main argument(s), supporting and challenging with contextual knowledge before making a judgement. Some pupils were, however, only supporting the arguments in the extracts which resulted in their evaluation being imbalanced. A small minority of pupils also challenged the extracts by stating what is not contained in them and minimal reward is given to this approach. Some students also challenged an extract by using material from another extract which is also not credited. There was also some repetition of contextual knowledge, particularly when students reached extract C, but this was credited.

Question 2

This was a popular question with students and there were many good answers. Some students had an impressively detailed knowledge of the developments in India in this period, and deployed their knowledge very well to make a nuanced argument. Good answers provided a balanced assessment of both social and economic change, although many students struggled to meaningfully assess the extent of change. Weaker responses resulted where students had revised the consequences of the Indian Mutiny, and deployed these without tailoring their response precisely to the question. These responses tended not to cover the time period as they were largely focused on change immediately after 1858, and they included a range of irrelevant material on the political structures of the Raj. Some more successful students were able to link material on the military and the political system to societal change, and they were credited if they did so. This question had the lowest average mark of the essay questions, but by a small margin.

Question 3

This was the most popular of the essay questions and was attempted by most students. There were many good answers which were both broad in their scope and specific in the details used. The best answers were able to make strong links between the developments during both wars and their consequences during the period. Weaker responses tended to adopt a more narrative approach, going through the various setbacks faced by the Empire without linking this to the events of the wars or other factors. These answers also tended to lack precision in the examples chosen, or confuse aspects of the First and Second World Wars. There were many impressive attempts at balance. Students were able to point out convincingly the strengths of the post First World War Empire or the rise of nationalism as an alternative reason for weakening the Empire. Some answers were unbalanced, and the wide scope of the question perhaps led some to lose control of their overall argument. Some students only discussed the First World War predominantly, no doubt due to timing issues.

Question 4

This was marginally the least popular essay option, yet it produced some impressive answers. There were some strong arguments as to how imperial influence declined over time and many responses covered the time period in the question well. Most responses focused on immigration to Britain and racism in British society – this was often well done, but many students did narrow their responses by discussing this issue alone, and tried to argue that racism suggested a lack of legacy of Empire which was not wholly convincing. There was some material on the attitudes of UK governments or Prime Ministers, but generally this was from stronger responses that were able to tie this in with attitudes amongst British people. Discussion of popular culture was generally successful and used a range of examples.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.