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# A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/2G: The Birth of the USA, 1760-1801  
Report on the Examination

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**Question 01**

The three sources proved accessible for the vast majority of students. Consequently, there were few responses in Level 1 and relatively few in Level 2. , There were not, however, very many responses in Level 5 . This tended to be because able students often overlooked the need to provide substantiated judgement on the value of each source. Some students were hindered by an overly prescriptive approach to the question, writing separate paragraphs on provenance, tone and content; which prevented them from explaining the value and limitations of the provenance in relation to the content and context of the source, leading to less convincing and thorough analysis. As a result, comments on provenance were often generic and non-specific.

**Source A**

There were very few poor responses with regard to this source as almost all students were able to recognise the author and make some comments on the value of the source. At the weaker end of Level 3, some students took the source at face value and declared that it was valuable evidence because it was written by Thomas Paine, the author of Common Sense, without considering the limitations. Mid-level 3 answers tended to point out the limitations of the source for its date and reference to 'a small debt' but did not go much further than that. In Level 4, students developed the balance further and offered greater depth, perhaps identifying aspects of the problems and disunity under the Articles of Confederation to make comments on the overly optimistic tone of Source A.

Most students were able to provide supporting contextual information about the problems in the 1780s, including state disunity and weakness of Congress. Some students drifted into an explanation of Common Sense, which was not precisely focused on the content of the source. In Level 4, some students expanded the breadth of contextual knowledge to include explanations of the failure of Jay in securing a treaty with Britain in relation to America's lack of foreign status in the 1780s as a problem facing the new nation. As above, for Source A, there were relatively few students who developed the balance achieved in Level 4 into substantiated judgement about the value of the source overall.

**Source B**

Weaker students made the incorrect assumption that this source was about foreign powers as the enemies who were against America and, therefore did not show an effective understanding of the content of the source. For those that misinterpreted the source completely this limited their mark as they were unable to show an understanding of all three sources. The vast majority of students were able to link the content of the source to some supporting contextual information about attitudes towards loyalists in post-war America. The range and depth of this contextual knowledge was a key differentiator between Level 3 and Level 4 answers.

Most students were able to offer some comment on the exodus of loyalists from America in these years, as well as identifying that New York was a loyalist stronghold. More effective responses developed the explanation of context, often focusing on the degree of negative actions towards loyalists, and Britain's failure to vacate America as a problem facing the new nation. In terms of provenance, the source proved accessible to most students who often made reference to the date of the source, as well as the fact that the author was an influential Federalist and the paper was directed to New York a former loyalist stronghold. In Level 3, these comments tended to lack depth and, although there may have been some balance, there was often no judgement. In Level 4,

some judgement was offered although this tended to lack depth. As mentioned above, few students provided sufficient depth of judgement to access Level 5.

### Source C

This proved to be the source which students analysed most effectively. As with Source A, there were very few students who did not show an understanding of the content and provenance of the source to a reasonable degree. In terms of content, the vast majority of students were able to make reference to the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation and the lack of States' unity after the war. At the lower end of Level 3, responses did not go much beyond these. Some lower Level 3 answers also got rather side-tracked by the reference to a letter from Washington and proceeded to provide quite a lot of information about Washington, which, whilst partially relevant, lacked precision from the source. In Level 4, students were able to provide more precise supporting contextual information about social, economic and political issues in the 1780s period to support the analysis of the source. They were also able to relate this to the claim that 'Congress was little better than a joke' to demonstrate contextual understanding of the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation.

With regard to provenance, most students made reference to the fact the source was written by Washington, who would have a good understanding of the problems in the new nation. Most answers also made reference to the date of the source, arguing it was a few years after the Peace Treaty, and therefore more likely to be valuable in understanding the problems. In Level 3, if there was any balance it tended to be limited to assertions such as Washington fought in the war of independence but would not be able to explain that he would be feeling fearful of the situation in America by the mid 1780s. In Level 4, the quality of balance was better developed, for example some students argued that Washington's claim that 'Congress was little better than a joke' can be questioned in the light of the extent of the economic and social problems in the states, but also identified limitations with the source for failing to acknowledge Congress's successes such as Land Ordinance. As above, not many of these Level 4 answers developed into the substantiated judgement required for Level 5.

### Question 2

There was a full range of answers to this question across all levels of the markscheme. Some students failed to grasp the full demands of the question, and wrote about the extent of British control, not if victory secured British control, thereby offering very little content and comment worthy of credit for the question. Level 2 responses showed some awareness of the question but supporting detail was inaccurate or very limited in scope. This often came in the form of vague generalisations about the war and British control which could have been applied to any period from 1760 onwards. Alternatively, some Level 2 answers became overly descriptive and/or lacked precise relevance. One example of this was answers which gave a detailed description of the war or westward expansion, which many students evidently knew a lot about, but which lacked any precise link to the question. References to the system of mercantilism continued to make regular, and often lengthy, appearances in responses credited in Level 3. Whilst relevant, content and comment on how far victory gave Britain secure control economically varied in degrees of precision and development. For some students there was a tendency to go beyond 1763 and include references to taxation which were irrelevant to question. Level 3 answers tended to be somewhat generalised in context. Students in this level often provided relevant factors about elements of British control, with varying degrees of accuracy/focus to the question on whether victory gave British secure control by 1763 without giving much precise detail about the aspects of control. Therefore, there were some competent explanations of the extent Britain had political, military,

economic and social control in the short and long-term, without linking these explanations to victory in the Seven Years War beyond some rather superficial comments.

In Level 4, students were able to offer some specific details about how far the British achieved secure control by 1763. Knowledge of the military, economic and social features of control was often strong, as was detail concerning westward expansion. More able students also offered evidence about the war and the terms of the peace treaty to assess how far the victory gave Britain secure control. The most successful answers, in Level 5, developed the specific points mentioned above into convincing and consistent judgement as to how far victory secured British control. Most often, these answers concluded that the impact of war and victory changed British policy towards its colonies and assessed the impact of these on British control by 1763.

### **Question 3**

The focus of this question proved to be an accessible one for the vast majority of the students who attempted it. The main differentiator in quality between responses was the depth and precision of supporting evidence offered. There were few responses in Level 1. In Level 2, less able students tended to lack the necessary factual knowledge to build an effective balanced answer to the question. For example, some essays were limited to a discussion of the Boston Massacre 1770 and the Boston Tea Party 1773, which therefore, only provided a partial response.

In Level 3, students were generally able to achieve some balance. This was commonly achieved through contrasting colonial and British actions in the years 1770 to 1774 and demonstrating an understanding of the impact both sides had on increasing tension in this period. These level 3 answer tended to refer to aspects of colonial actions such as dressing up as Native Americans in the Boston Tea Party, rather than exploring colonial actions in much depth. There was also some inaccuracy in some of these answers, most commonly around British actions, with some students writing about the Townshend duties 1767 rather than the Coercive Acts 1774.

Level 4 and 5 answers provided a greater range and depth of supporting information and explanation. There was often effective balance in the assessment of the actions of the colonists and the British. For example, the Boston Massacre, 1770 was often assessed effectively both in the context of the role of British and the presence of the British army in the colonies, and the ideological motivations of the colonists in portraying the event as a massacre. Similarly, the Tea Act 1773, was assessed as a way of protecting the East India Company but led to an extreme reaction by the colonists in the Boston Tea Party which resulted in the British passing the Coercive Acts 1774, thereby demonstrating good conceptual awareness of the period to reach a well supported judgement for the question.

### **Question 4**

Although on the surface this appeared to be an accessible and straightforward question, a significant number of students found it difficult to marshal their knowledge into an effective answer focused on the requirements of the question. Almost all students showed an understanding of Hamilton's influence on the development of political parties, therefore, there were very few answers in Level 1. However, there were a significant number of responses in Level 2 as many students wrote an answer focused on Hamilton's financial policies pre-1796, rather than focusing on the actual question asked. This included several very knowledgeable and eloquent students who, unfortunately, launched into a general analysis of Hamilton and his financial reports without directly addressing the question.

In Level 3, students tended to make links to the question but these were often superficial and not very convincing. These answers tended to want to answer an alternative question about Hamilton

and his policies and just about managed to demonstrate some understanding of the actual question set. Effective focus in these answers was more likely to come from the argument of Hamilton's influence after 1796 and his ideology for the role of central government. For balance, however, these answers then tended to give an overview of 'other factors' such as Adam's role as President, or political opponents' views and actions, which lacked a precise focus on the development of political parties.

There were plenty of Level 4 and Level 5 answers from students who recognised the precise focus of the question and were able to organise their knowledge effectively in response. The point referred to above, about the influence of Hamilton for instance in the 1796 and 1801 elections, was included in most answers, but there were additional effective points in balance about the role of other factors such as foreign policy, Adams and Jefferson to reach a substantiated judgement for the question. The more effective answers often argued that Hamilton's legacy and influence helped develop political and geographical divisions in America and therefore was significant in the development of political parties. For balance, these responses offered a range of effective points to support the argument that Hamilton was motivated by his desire for a strong central government, along with a range of other factors to reach a well-balanced and supported judgement for the question.

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

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