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# A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/2S The Making of Modern Britain, 1951-2007  
Report on the Examination

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## General Observations

The paper proved accessible to the vast majority of students and generally discriminated well, allowing a full range of marks to be awarded. There were very few rubric infringements, though a few students disappointingly voted with their pens and did not attempt three questions. Some students did not manage their time very well. Although this applied to a relatively small number, poor time management remains a factor in underachievement.

The highest achieving students had been very well prepared for a depth study, signposting their argument in their opening paragraph and offering detailed and precise information to support their arguments. The very best showed evidence of having read widely, which had undoubtedly helped promote strong conceptual and verbal understanding. Clearly, the Advanced Information sent to centres had helped considerably to target learning, supporting both weaker and stronger students.

No one essay was obviously more 'popular' than any other, again probably reflecting the impact of the Advanced Information, providing students with greater choice.

The best answers were a joy to read, showing both deep engagement with the questions and a high level of language ability.

### Question 01

The Suez crisis is a part of a wider bullet point in the specification on foreign relations. Students generally understood the causes and course of the crisis very well. Some lower-attaining students focused too much on describing the crisis but higher-attaining students were able to apply much of their wider knowledge of foreign affairs in this period to support their analysis of the value of the sources.

A lot of answers tended to be formulaic, following the prescription set out in the indicative content of the mark scheme. However, this works for many students, allowing them to marshal their answers and can be a very effective approach given the complexity of skills required for 01.

Provenance remains a tough skill for some students who find it difficult to go beyond stock phraseology, such as: source A is from a newspaper so it is bound to be biased; source B is from Anthony Eden so it must be reliable/truthful; source C is a long time after the event so Crossland may have forgotten something. Such commentaries are rewarded at a basic level but better answers need to be more nuanced, measured and, where possible, supported through own knowledge.

Tone is still often misunderstood and misapplied. Students need to be more aware that not all sources open themselves to meaningful comments on tone and a top level response does not necessarily require a focus on tone.

No comparison of the sources is required but students should focus more on strengthening their summative judgements of value for each source. Are they well supported and demonstrated or are they simply asserted?

#### Source A

This was generally clearly understood, though many students assumed that the editorial was written after, rather than during, the crisis. Many answers saw the source's value in reflecting the

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public, parliamentary and international outrage at Eden's machinations and the best were able to support this through well applied own knowledge. Similarly, many saw its short-termism and were able to explain the editorial's inaccurate prediction of 'electoral destruction' facing the Conservative Party in this context.

### **Source B**

Clearly, the source has value coming directly from a confidential document written by Eden but good answers showed a little more insight by querying the extent to which Eden seemed to be avoiding any reflection on the ethics of his actions. Many students were able to unpack Eden's reference to 'revealed realities', exploring the wider international repercussions of Suez in relation to the Commonwealth, the USA and Europe.

### **Source C**

Some good answers explored the value of the source in the context of Crossland as a political participant during the crisis from the opposition benches, and the value or limitation that hindsight offers to a historian. A number of students confused their chronology, assuming that Wilson had already come to office at the time the book review was published.

### **Question 02**

The main issue that emerged in this question was the degree of balance students were able to apply to their answers. The choice of factors challenging the view was very wide-ranging and students did not need to reference them all to be awarded marks at the higher levels. However, to do so they did need to write more than a token paragraph on industrial relations. Some of the best answers not only showed a good depth of knowledge of union affairs but were also able to link what they knew to other factors. Common examples were links to economic weakness and Heath's electioneering ability to target Wilson's failure to rein in the unions, particularly in relation to the embarrassing climbdown over In Place Of Strife.

### **Question 03**

Most students who answered this question maintained a clear focus on the specific policies of Privatisation and Right to Buy. The best demonstrated a commendable understanding of the pros and cons of both and were able to differentiate their responses in terms of social and economic impact. Some leaned to very positive assessments, others to largely critical standpoints, but were equally rewarded. Good answers were also generally able to put the policies into the context of Thatcher's overarching ideological social and economic goals. Unfortunately, some answers drifted into 'all I know about the economy in this period' and were only credited where they could demonstrate a link to the focus of the question. Quite a few students were keen to write about the miners' strike on the misunderstood basis that the coal industry had been nationalised by Thatcher.

### **Question 04**

This question proved very accessible, with many students being well informed both on the divisions plaguing the Conservatives in this period and on the individual strengths and weaknesses of all four leaders. The best answers linked the two strands, identifying the extent to which each successive leader tackled the deep-seated schisms within the party. Weaker students looking for a

third question to tackle seemed to have gravitated to this question. Such answers often confused names and chronology at will and did not go much further, for example, than logging Hague's juvenile boasting or Cameron's visit to the Arctic to show his environmental credentials. Most students adopted a chronological approach while others opted for the more conceptual, thematic approach. Both approaches were able to score highly.

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

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