



AS LEVEL HISTORY

7041/2S The Making of Modern Britain, 1951 - 1979
Report on the Examination

7041/2S
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General Observations

As in 2022, the paper produced a very broad range of marks: from 3 to 48 out of an entry of 133. This demonstrated both the wide range of ability within the candidature and the relative accessibility of the paper.

Again, as in 2022, there were no rubric infringements. All in all, the format of the paper seems now well understood by centres and students.

The overall quality of answers this year was stronger than in recent years, with 40% of students scoring 30 marks or better. It is not clear why this occurred. It may be that question 01 proved more accessible, thereby increasing the proportion of higher marks.

The highest achieving students demonstrated clear conceptual awareness and the ability to communicate effectively. They set out their direction of argument clearly and were able to sustain their focus, leading to a substantiated judgement. Unfortunately, some lower achieving students showed themselves to be weakly informed, producing largely generic responses. Writing 'all I know' did not amount to a great deal for the least well prepared students.

Question 1

The focus of the question – the Conservative loss in the 1964 election - was clearly understood, and the two sources allowed the students to demonstrate their understanding of provenance and content effectively.

The period 1951-1964 is relatively well known by most students, who seem to revel in the facts and figures associated with the prosperity and the scale of social and cultural change of these years.

Provenance is a high level skill and many students still struggle with it as a task. Many take refuge in a 'stock' approach but this can, cumulatively, add up to good understanding. However, it remains a challenging proposition for students to reflect coherently about provenance, and the marking rewarded students who made a concerted effort to tackle this requirement.

Consideration of 'tone' remains a problem. It is often misunderstood and many students still feel they have to refer to it even if the source itself has a relatively 'neutral' tone or voice. Any appropriate commentary on tone was rewarded; misplaced understanding was not penalised.

Source A

Most students managed some valid evaluation of provenance for this source. Many students had heard of George Brown (usually for heading up the DEA in Wilson's first ministry). More context was not expected but a very small number of students had some sense of him being a relatively controversial character within the Labour ranks.

Any provenance related to the House of Commons or Parliament tends to generate stereotypical responses such as it must be 'true' or 'trustworthy' but, on the whole, this approach was not common to the majority.

There was enough in the content of the source to direct students to demonstrate relevant knowledge on the strengths and weakness of the British economy as inherited by Labour. Weaker responses became bogged down in descriptive passages, such as on affluence or 'stop-go', but

the best were able to link their knowledge to judge the value of Brown's partisan and tarnished view of Conservative governments.

Some students referenced future developments to criticise Brown's promise to avoid short-termism and this was appropriately rewarded.

Source B

The provenance of this source proved a little more problematical. It was not expected that Sampson would be known but a number of perceptive students identified the 'bestseller' reference in the attribution as a sign that his book, and therefore his conclusions, might be valuable.

The weaker answers on provenance often focused on the reference to 'journalism', arguing stereotypically that Sampson must be exaggerating for the sake of 'entertainment'. The very weakest answers assumed that Sampson's book was a novel and so was of little value.

Most of the students grasped Sampson's main premise, that the Labour victory represented something of a changing of the guard both in respect of social attitudes and of political leadership – as personified by Wilson as a contrast to the Conservative, aristocratic elite.

Students differentiated themselves in how they used their, often extensive, knowledge of social change. The strongest responses were selective and targeted; the least effective were characterised by simple description, usually about 'teenagers' or 'affluence'. Some linked their knowledge of satire and scandal very well to Sampson's notion of a 'new social and political climate'.

Question 2

This was by far and away the more popular of the two essay questions, chosen by approximately 75% of students.

Knowledge of liberal reforming legislation was often extensive. However, many students were unable to restrain themselves from describing legislation in detail, without any critical evaluation of the relevance of their knowledge to the question.

The purpose of the question was to explore to whom, or to what, might the legislation be primarily attributed. Students who recognised this focus scored well. The strongest answers offered a nuanced analysis of Labour's part in the legislation, identifying the key role of Jenkins but also understanding the divergence of opinion in the party. Students balanced the argument by identifying 'bottom up' factors, such as feminism, or by focusing on the role of individual backbenchers who, with Jenkins' support, were able to push through pioneering changes.

Students were also able to produce balanced answers by acknowledging the limitations of many of the reforms. A few students misinterpreted the question by targeting technological change as their focus, not social change.

Question 3

This question tended to produce answers that congregated at each end of the quality spectrum. For some, it seemed the least of two evils and their answers tended to be highly generalist. Others, however, demonstrated a real passion for, and understanding of, race relations in this period.

The strongest answers provided very well supported analysis arguing for and against the statement. Judgement tended to be ambivalent and varied but many concluded that nothing much changed very quickly , with race relations often seeming to take one step forwards and two steps backwards.

Conclusion

The paper was, on the whole, a very positive experience to mark. Many students seemed to value the qualification sufficiently to prepare themselves very well. Some students seemed not to have done so , but this proportion was fewer than in previous years. On balance, there seems to remain a place for AS level to demonstrate valid skills and conceptual understanding for those students who, for whatever reason, do not pursue the full A Level option.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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