



A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/1G Challenge and transformation: Britain, c1851 - 1964
Report on the Examination

7042/1G
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General

Time management did not appear to be an issue and most students were able to complete three answers. Most students understood the requirements of the essay questions and attempted to offer balanced views. There were some excellent examples of high level responses. As always, credit was given to the students who genuinely engaged with the question asked, paid due heed to its key words and date range, and tried to construct a coherent argument backed by historical evidence. Clearly, those that had revised thoroughly and were able to be more selective in the evidence they put forward to support their arguments were likely to score rather more highly than those who could only repeat one or two relevant supporting facts, generic commentary, or in some cases, only offer assertion devoid of supporting examples. Some students still appear less secure in the requirements of question 1.

Section A

Question 1

In question 1, students are required to evaluate three separate extracts in relation to an issue – Gladstone's impact on politics in the years 1866 to 1894. They were not asked to evaluate their provenance or assess the 'value' of the extracts. At the weaker end of the responses, there was still some confusion with the skills from component 2 (sources). Those that did this wasted valuable time, although they were not penalised for so doing. Some weaker responses also relayed much of the content of the extracts back to the examiner in their own words without much attempt to evaluate or provide their own knowledge as evidence.

Less well performing answers also often resorted to fact checking the extracts rather than evaluating the arguments. Comments such as it is 'true' that Gladstone supported Free Trade (mentioned in extract A) or it is 'true' that Gladstone supported low tax and spend (as suggested in B) without understanding that these were often examples used by the historian to support an overarching argument rather than being an argument in themselves. Students would be best advised to avoid referencing 'truth' and opt for more evaluative language to help steer their reflections and answers more appropriately.

Whilst most students were able to understand the main arguments in all 3 extracts, some overlooked or failed to understand the main argument in B. Extract B's main point was that Gladstone's reputation as a reforming radical politician has been exaggerated.

A further key differentiator this year between student answers that performed well compared to the least well performing was the effective deployment of a range of relevant evidence to support evaluation. Weaker responses often had few if any tangible examples. Best answers were also able to explain how the contextual knowledge supported or challenged the arguments advanced by the historian. Responses that often listed all of the arguments first and then outlined the evidence often missed this important explanation and analysis and failed to identify the main argument.

Section B

Question 2

Most students understood what was demanded from the question. The best performing answers considered a range of potential causes of the economic weakness to 1929 such as foreign competition, the lack of modernisation and investment. Very strong answers compared and assessed the rank order of these factors and explained the interplay between causes over the length of the period. Some responses had a limited understanding of the impact of the First World War. Some weaker answers also made the assumption that the Wall St Crash had significantly affected the UK economy by 1929 which led them to utilise evidence from the early the 1930s and thus, outside the chronology of the question.

Question 3

There were some strong answers to this question that were able to chart the struggles of the Liberal Party and the weaknesses of the Labour governments in the 1920s. They were also able to appreciate the splits within the Labour Party and its problems within the National Government. Solid responses contrasted these issues with the strength of the policies and leadership of the Conservatives. In particular, Baldwin's calm handling of the 1926 General Strike and the Abdication Crisis and the achievements of Churchill during the war. Weaker responses only offered a very cursory glance at the Liberals and Labour. Some excluded the period after 1929 and thus did not respond to the full scope of the question. It always needs to be remembered that Component 1 is a breadth study and that students have to be able to deploy knowledge and second order concepts such as continuity and change (as relevant) in their analysis of a time period which will be at least 20 years.

Question 4

This was slightly less popular compared to questions 2 and 3, however there were some really impressive responses to it. Stronger answers covered a broad range of issues such as the position of women, the prevalence of class differences and poverty as well as emerging issues, such as attitudes towards immigration. Excellent answers for example, explained why there was a continuity of obstacles for certain social groups as well as an assessment of the degree of equality achieved by 1964. By doing so, such answers demonstrated the level of higher order thinking required for the top marks. The treatment of and comparison to the 1930s in many responses was quite thin. Some weaker responses struggled to provide many tangible examples or balance across the period.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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