



A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/2A Royal Authority and the Angevin Kings, 1154 - 1216
Report on the Examination

7042/2A
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General

The majority of students sitting this examination were generally well prepared and had clearly revised their material thoroughly. Time was well managed, with very few students not attempting to answer all of the questions required by the rubric. It was also interesting to see that students decided to tackle the questions in the order which they felt most confident, for example answering the essays first. This approach is perfectly acceptable, students just need to remember to label their answers clearly and it is very helpful for the examiner if they can leave sufficient space between their answers for comments to be added. A minority had poor written communication skills, including grammar and legibility, which does make assessing extended answers more difficult, as does extensive use of asterisks and not crossing out rough working. A significant number of students had clearly engaged with wider academic reading on the topics, which was sometimes well used in their answers, though historians should not be used in lieu of factual historical information, and the use of historiography is not required for the highest marks, it is the student's own analysis and evaluation which is being tested.

Question 01

With this question, students were required to evaluate the value of three separate sources in relation to an issue – the origins of the Great Rebellion. They were not asked to compare the given sources and those who did wasted valuable time, although they were not penalised for so doing. The answer did not require an introduction or an overall conclusion, but some concluding judgement on each source in relation to the question posed was helpful to meet the criteria for the highest marks.

The best answers were a nuanced evaluation of both provenance and content of the sources. Formulaic, rote-learned approaches were often less effective. A significant number of students were able to identify features about provenance (eg that Source C was written by monks) but then were not able to evaluate this beyond a simple comment that 'they were there at the time and so this source is accurate'. This approach often leads to much speculation around provenance (for example assuming that monks on the Scottish border will be biased against King Henry) which is not then borne out by the content of the source. The best answers were able to combine the two. A good example of this might be an answer to Source A which argued that the family of William Marshal were probably in a good position to know what had happened, but they might be hesitant to say much about the Great Rebellion as William will have been on the rebels' side due to his position at the time. This possible limitation is then borne out within the content of the source which is rather vague and even says 'it is a long story, but, in short, the Devil...' Here, the student has suggested a limitation, but then was able to back it up by connecting provenance comments to the content of the source. This is a very effective technique which leads to high marks. Simply identifying provenance and making a vague assertion about tone does not lead to higher marks.

The sources were mostly understood, but a surprising number of students thought that William Marshal himself had written Source A, which did affect how convincing their analysis was. Some students knew some interesting contextual details about the sources, especially Gerald of Wales, and were able to deploy this knowledge to produce very effective analyses. It was disappointing to see a persistent minority making very few references to 'value' at all and conflating this with validity, utility, reliability and accuracy, which are not the same thing. It is vital that regular links to the wording of the specific question are made.

Question 02

This was the most popular of the essay questions and there were some excellent answers which showed lots of detailed and conceptual understanding of the dispute between monarch and archbishop. It can be difficult to ascribe motives to individuals in the past, but the vast majority of students were able to select events from within the period of the dispute and then use these to argue for either personality or principle being to blame. The most effective answers were organised thematically, those who worked through the events chronologically tended to lapse into narrative. Equally, the best answers were able to go beyond the years 1163 and 1164 and consider the behaviour of both men during Becket's exile and the events leading to his death. However, it should be noted that there is no evidence for Henry ordering Becket's death by declaiming 'Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest'. This is an important detail as the events leading to the archbishop's murder are more nuanced than this and were explored in detail in the best answers. There was some confusion with terminology in some of the answers, such as 'theocratic' and 'sacramental' being used in a way which suggested that students were not really comfortable with what they meant. However, there were other answers which showed very developed understanding of the key issues between Church and State in the 12th century and these were a pleasure to read.

Question 03

Students seemed to be quite confident in John's own culpability in causing the loss of Normandy in 1204, but many did not seem to have considered that the legacy he was left by Richard in 1199 might have been important. This led a large number of answers which struggled to deal effectively with the key factor within the question. Many students simply described the reasons why Richard and Philip fell out with each other, without connecting this to the problems faced by John in 1204. Effective answers were able to discuss the problematic financial legacy which John inherited or how the loss of Gisors and large parts of the Vexin made his war with Philip very difficult. The best answers were able to discuss the Treaty of Le Goulet and its consequences in detail. The biggest issue with answers was that there was a tendency to lapse into description (eg of the Lusignan Affair) but not then to be able to explain why this was important in the loss of Normandy. Students should be encouraged to begin their paragraphs with an analytical point and then provide evidence to support this, rather than trying to tell the story with later links to the question.

Question 04

Students who chose this question seemed to be well prepared and were mostly able to provide a balanced assessment of whether the dispute was a good or bad thing for royal authority. The best answers could appreciate that the situation was rather fluid and that the position might have been negative in 1213 (John had to accept he was a vassal and Langton's appointment), but that this improved and, in 1216, the relationship with the Papacy actually helped to prop up royal authority. Some students took the issue of the Interdict a little at face value, assuming that this must have been negative for John. However, better answers were aware that the evidence suggests that, outside of the clergy, there was limited concern about the Interdict. Indeed, the majority of the nobility supported John's stance in this matter.

A minority of answers misread the question and began discussing other reasons why royal authority might have been damaged in this period, but this was not relevant in this instance.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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