



A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/2B The Wars of the Roses, 1450 – 1499
Report on the Examination

7042/2B
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Question 01

The majority of students made good use of all three sources, especially when making judgements about the content of each source and its value in relation to this. Some students were also able to assess value in relation to the historical context of the sources. The best students also considered limitations before reaching and substantiating a clear judgment for each source.

An area that a high proportion of students would benefit from further support on, was the use of provenance to assess sources' value. A number of students made a very superficial assessment of provenance, often just paraphrasing what was given on the paper, making very simplistic comments, or not matching what they said to the actual content of the source. For example, with source B, many concluded that as the source was written at the times of the Tudors, the source was likely to be incredibly biased against Richard. While there were hints of criticism in the source, it was largely focused on Buckingham's motives and, holistically quite a balanced account of the causes of the rebellion. Students' assessment of the value of the provenance would be strengthened if they supported statements with evidence from the sources and read the whole source before beginning an evaluation.

An approach that students would be wise to avoid is to argue that sources are limited because of omission. For example, a number of students argued that source A was of limited value as it made no comment regarding the causes of the rebellion. Students should be advised that this is a limited criterion against which to judge sources, as no source can comprehensively cover every aspect of an event.

Question 02

Question 2 was the second most popular essay question. Generally, students' knowledge of the events of these years was very pleasing. Their use of evidence to analyse the counter-argument was especially pleasing, with many considering the strength exhibited by Edward at events such as the Battles of Mortimer's Cross and Towton. Some were also able to comment on complex historical issues, for example explaining how the killing of the Duke of York violated the Act of Accord and gave the Yorkists a stronger claim to the throne.

However, students were less confident when supporting the proposition in the question. This is understandable, as it would be a very valid argument to conclude that the Yorkists were in a position of considerable strength after the Battle of York. It is therefore to students' credit that the vast majority made valiant attempts to consider the supporting argument. Their evidence included ideas such as: the significance of those who were killed at Wakefield; the momentum the victory gave to the Lancastrians who went on to regain control of the King after the Second Battle of St Albans.

A significant number of students noticed that their evidence leaned towards the counter-argument and naturally used this to make statements regarding a final judgment. However, the majority of these made summative arguments or unsubstantiated comments, which fell short of the clinching argument required for the highest level to be awarded. This is reflected in students' attempts at all three essays and remains an area that students would benefit from further support on.

Question 03

Question 03 was by far the most popular question option. Students felt confident with this topic and the majority were able to construct convincing arguments regarding how Edward's marriage alienated Warwick. Lower ability students often described events rather than analysing how they lead to tension, but most knew the topic well.

Students were often less confident when considering the counter-argument. However, there were high quality responses that considered factors such as Warwick's ambition or Edward's foreign policy as other factors leading to the disintegration of their relationship.

Students were also less inclined to consider events towards the end of the period of the question, which lead to them often concluding that Edward's behaviour around and following the marriage was the most significant cause of the tension. Responses that considered Warwick's (later) betrayals often developed more convincing definitive judgments as they considered the whole period rather than earlier events only. Such an approach often included consideration of the historical concept of chronology, concluding that while Edward's choice of wife was the trigger for tensions between him and Warwick, in the long term there were more provocative factors at play.

However, there were some good quality clinching arguments that demonstrated that the tension caused by Edward's marriage was the most important factor because it was linked to and caused other factors, such as foreign policy.

Question 04

Question 04 was the least popular option and the one where students performed less highly. While the majority of responses demonstrated an awareness of the support Warbeck received from foreign powers, these were often descriptive and failed to be substantial in an analysis of how Henry VII's foreign policy was able to eliminate this support.

Attempts at the counter-argument were also, largely, unsuccessful. Many stated that Warbeck received little domestic support, but were unable to substantiate this claim. Or students understood that Warbeck attempted to capitalise on the Cornish Uprising and that he was ultimately executed, but were unable to explain why his efforts failed.

While there were some good responses to this question, they were in the minority. This was the question that fewest students achieved a level 4 or above.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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