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# A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/2P The Transformation of China, 1936 - 1997  
Report on the Examination

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### Question 1

The question presented students with three sources relating to the beginnings of the Cultural Revolution and asked them to assess the value of the sources for a historian studying those events. The strongest answers were able to use their knowledge of the historical context to show how the sources revealed the different phases of the start of the Cultural Revolution. Source A focused on the initial attack on culture and education, Source B showed the developing attacks on the Chinese Communist Party itself, while Source C revealed Mao's response to the February Adverse Current and the attempt by the Politburo and PLA to moderate the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. The strongest answers were also able to read the tone of the sources correctly to show how the author's attitude and intentions affected the value of the sources. Those students who did both of these well, alongside detailed supporting knowledge, scored well.

The most common features of weaker answers were a lack of supporting own knowledge and an over-reliance on vague statements which repeated the content of the sources. Some also struggled to place the sources into the exact historical context (especially for Source C) which meant they did not understand the key value of the content. Some students also struggled to read the tone of both Sources B and C, with some believing that Deng Xiaoping was showing support for the Cultural Revolution in B and that Mao was attacking Lin Biao and Jiang Qing in Source C. Students must ensure they have a strong awareness of the different phases of the Cultural Revolution in order to aid understanding.

### Question 2

This question asked students to evaluate whether the CCP's successful consolidation of power in China between 1949 and 1953 was mainly due to its policy of land reform. This was the most popular essay question on the paper. There were some very good answers which showed a detailed analysis of the varying ways in which land reform helped the CCP's consolidation of power, although weaker answers could only really give one reason, which was that it made them popular with peasants, and relied on vague assertions. There were a huge range of possible alternative explanations for why the CCP was able to consolidate power (more than could be covered by the Indicative Content mark scheme) and these were credited. The very best answers were able to give specific detail on a wide range of methods used by the CCP and, most importantly, were able to give persuasive arguments as to why one was more important than another. The most common feature of weaker answers was a lack of detail and a lack of argument as to why one factor was more important than another, and a narrow focus where land reform was only compared to one other means by which the CCP consolidated its power. Unfortunately, some misread the question and believed it related to why the CCP had won the civil war. Where possible, credit was given to comments on land reform, but most of the other factors were irrelevant. Students should have it clear in their minds that questions with the date range 1949-53 relate to the unit on the consolidation of power following the civil war.

### Question 3

This question asked students to evaluate whether the most significant impact of the Great Leap Forward on China in 1958 to 1962 was economic. The strongest answers were arranged thematically, with students contrasting the economic, social and political impacts of the Great Leap Forward and making reasonable arguments as to why one was more significant than the other in the short-term. Some looked ahead to the Cultural Revolution in the conclusion and as long as that built on the situation in 1962, that was acceptable. As always, detailed knowledge and high conceptual understanding was also key. The weaker answers struggled with how to organise the essay, particularly what should be considered an economic or social or political impact. There is heavy overlap between social and economic so this was marked positively. Weaker answers also struggled to give a clear account of the political impact of the Great Leap Forward.

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#### **Question 4**

This question asked students to consider whether Deng Xiaoping policies benefited the Chinese people during the years 1978 to 1986. Credit was given to an analysis of any of Deng's policies, but the key issue was whether the student focused on how it impacted on the people. There was a clear tendency to describe policies at length without relating to how they actually impacted the lives of people. Students clearly knew a lot about Deng's economic policies and could provide considerable detail, but this tendency to describe rather than actually answering the question led to a number of low marks. Students must remember the importance of relating their points to the exact question being asked. Those that did that, alongside detailed knowledge, scored very well.



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

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