



A-Level **History**

7042/2P The Transformation of China, 1936-1997

Report on the examination

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Question 01

This question presented students with three sources relating to the Hundred Flowers and Anti-Rightist campaigns and asked them to assess their value for an historian studying political developments in 1956/7. The strongest answers used knowledge of the historical context to demonstrate how the sources revealed different political aspects of the Hundred Flowers campaign and its transition into the Anti-Rightist campaign. **Source A** was a speech delivered to the Central Committee of the CCP; **Source B** was a public criticism of Mao and the Party, published in a newspaper at the end of the Hundred Flowers Campaign, the likes of which triggered the switch in 1957 to the Anti-Rightist campaign. **Source C** revealed the experiences of the Anti-Rightist campaign through the eyes of a victim. The strongest answers intertwined discussions of the content with the provenance to evaluate, using own knowledge, the value of each source in relation to the question. For example, with Source A the strongest answers identified that the content of Lu Dingyi's speech echoed Mao's call for the Hundred Flowers campaign and it occurred before the launch of the campaign in an effort to gather support because Mao did not, at this time, have complete authority over the Party.

The most common features of lower-band answers were a lack of supporting own knowledge and an over-reliance on vague statements which, on occasion, simply just repeated the content of the sources. For example, the accreditation for Source A and Source B both referred to propaganda and some students used this as an opportunity to produce generic comments about the value of the source. For example: "this source has limited value because it is propaganda and designed to win people over." Without further evaluation linked to the source content/provenance/contextual knowledge these kinds of statements were indicative of Level 2 qualities. Some also struggled to place the sources into the exact historical context. This frequently occurred for Source B, where some argued that the content revealed attitudes to the Anti-Rightist campaign, even though the source was produced before the campaign was launched. In some instances, students also struggled to read the content of source C, with some believing that the first lines of the source were plans that the author had rather than lies made up about him. Doing so altered the understanding of the source content and limited the marks awarded.

Question 02

This question asked students to assess the validity of the view that popular support was more important than military factors in bringing about communist victory in the Civil War by 1949. This was the most popular essay question on the paper. There were some very good answers which showed a detailed analysis of the interconnectivity between the two factors. The very best answers formed logical judgements that were sustained throughout, offered a balanced discussion of the question and deployed a good range of knowledge. Material relating to the first phase of the civil war, the Sino-Japanese War, and foreign aid was credited as long as these points were clearly linked to CCP victory in 1949. The most common feature of lower-band answers was a lack of detail/argument as to why one factor was more important than another, these often gave a descriptive overview of each factor before offering an

unsupported conclusion. Some students demonstrated a loose focus to the question and strayed into discussions of other factors that were not clearly related to the premise of the question. Answers of this type remained in L3 as a maximum.

Question 03

This question asked students to evaluate the extent to which Chinese people benefitted from CCP social policies in the years 1962-66. A close focus on the years in the question was a requirement for higher band marks. Many students demonstrated a knowledge of social policy before 1962, with discussions of Marriage Laws in 1950 featuring often. The strongest answers were arranged thematically, with students analysing factors related to areas such as the health of women, education, and religion and making reasonable arguments as to how Chinese people benefitted or not. As always, detailed knowledge and high conceptual understanding was key to reaching high levels.

Question 04

This question asked students to consider whether Deng Xiaoping transformed agriculture and industry in the years 1978 to 1984. To achieve L4 and L5 students needed to offer some discussion of how they interpreted transformation and to also conduct a balanced analysis of both industry and agriculture. Less successful answers tended to give one-sided answers or offered descriptions of Deng's four modernisations; these types of responses struggled to move beyond L3 qualities. Less successful responses described the policies at length without effectively engaging with the concept of 'transformation'. Students clearly knew a lot about Deng's policies and could provide considerable detail, but material was not always shaped to answer the question and this led to lower 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.