



A Level **History**

7042/1G

Report on the examination

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General

Overall, responses to the paper showed a broad range of attainment, with most students demonstrating a sound understanding of the questions they chose to answer. It was encouraging to see that students generally managed their time well, with very few signs of rushed or incomplete answers. Most students provided full responses to all three questions, suggesting that they were well prepared for the demands of the paper.

Stronger responses were characterised by a clear and sustained focus on the specific demands of each question, supported by well-chosen historical evidence and a coherent structure. These answers typically addressed the full chronological range of the question and demonstrated balance, often exploring different interpretations or factors before reaching judgements grounded in historical context.

At the lower end, responses were sometimes narrower in scope, focusing too heavily on one part of the period or offering a limited range of evidence. These answers often lacked an overarching argument and tended to adopt a list-like or descriptive approach. In addition, less successful responses typically showed limited analysis, with insufficient explanation of the significance of the evidence used or how it supported the overall argument. Even where knowledge was relevant, it was not always effectively deployed.

As always, the most successful students combined accurate and relevant knowledge with thoughtful engagement, showing the ability to form and sustain well-supported arguments across all three of their answers.

Question 1

Most students approached the extract question by examining the extracts sequentially, which remains a valid and effective method. However, a small number of responses still included discussion of provenance, tone, or utility — areas that are not a requirement of Component 1 and therefore not credited. Centres may wish to remind students that the focus of this question is on the arguments presented in the extracts and how convincing they are in light of contextual knowledge.

In lower-scoring responses there was a lack of secure contextual knowledge of Ireland in general, and of this specific period in particular. Where students had studied aspects of Irish history, it was often limited to Gladstone and Home Rule, or events from 1912 onwards. In some cases, there was heavy dependence on the extracts themselves, with little ability to evaluate or extend the arguments presented. Less successful responses tended to use the extracts as springboards for recalling general information or testing isolated facts, rather than identifying the central argument in each extract and evaluating its persuasiveness. These answers often relied upon paraphrasing or description. Another common weakness was the tendency to accept the arguments in the extracts at face value: a more balanced and critical approach across the extracts is essential to reach the higher levels.

Extract A was generally well handled. Most students recognised the argument that Irish society was improving due to Conservative policy, particularly under Balfour. Stronger responses developed this with reference to specific reforms, such as the Land Acts of 1887 and 1903, and were able to balance the interpretation by highlighting Balfour's coercive policies, including the 1887 Crimes Act and his reputation as 'Bloody Balfour'.

Extract B's argument — that the loss of Irish cultural identity reawakened nationalist sentiment — was also widely identified. Good responses supported this with contextual knowledge about the Gaelic League's promotion of the Irish language and literature, and also the growing interest in traditional sports. Some were also able to challenge the extract's contention that Parnell's political downfall created a vacuum, by pointing to continued nationalist activism and the growing momentum for independence in the early 1900s. Less successful responses struggled to go beyond surface-level description or generalised comments.

Extract C proved more difficult for some students. The strongest responses identified the argument about the economic roots of Ulster unionism and provided detailed support about Belfast's industrial character — including shipbuilding and textiles — before going on to challenge the extract by discussing other causes of unionist resistance. However, less successful answers often did not engage with the economic theme, lacked supporting knowledge, or misunderstood the geographical references altogether. This sometimes resulted in a confused or inaccurate reading of the extract.

Overall, the extract question discriminated effectively. Those who performed well demonstrated secure contextual knowledge, the ability to identify and evaluate arguments. Those who performed less well typically lacked contextual grounding, relied too heavily on paraphrasing, and treated the extracts as standalone prompts.

Question 2

This was a relatively popular question and was generally well understood. Most students focused on the more obvious elements of Disraeli's legacy — particularly the 1867 Second Reform Act and the social reform legislation under his ministry. These were valid points, and most could offer at least a basic explanation of them. However, a significant number spent disproportionate time on the Second Reform Act, sometimes treating it as the dominant or sole example of his legacy, and often offered only generalised comment on social reform, with limited analysis of how this actually contributed to strengthening the party. Few explored in any depth the ideological impact of Disraeli's "One Nation" speeches or his role in modernising and reorganising the party.

Where students attempted to support the premise of the question, the biggest difficulty was not simply in recalling examples, but in analysing *how* and *why* these examples helped to strengthen the Conservatives across the period. Many struggled to link social reform legislation to electoral outcomes and their appeal, or to explain the impact of Disraeli's actions beyond the 1870s.

Stronger responses moved beyond Disraeli's period in office and recognised the broader implications of his legacy — including the growth of working-class Conservative support

through the Primrose League and the ongoing influence of ideas he had helped shape. These answers often demonstrated thematic breadth.

In terms of counterargument, many simply cited the Home Rule split or Chamberlain–Gladstone tensions without developing how or why these aided the Conservatives. In some cases, this amounted to a simplistic assertion that “the Liberals were divided, so the Conservatives gained.” Stronger responses demonstrated a broader range by considering the roles of Lord Salisbury and Richard Middleton. They recognised the significance of post-Disraeli Conservative leadership in cultivating Liberal Unionist alliances, reorganising party campaigning, and positioning the Conservatives as the natural party of empire. However, this was often absent from middle- and lower-scoring responses, which tended to end around 1886.

Question 3

This question produced a wide range of responses. While the topic was accessible, many students struggled to fully address the demands of the question, and less successful responses were relatively common.

A key issue was limited chronological coverage. Most students focused either on the economic challenges and policies of the 1920s — such as the Gold Standard, unemployment, and some coverage of the General Strike — **or** on the National Government’s response to the Wall Street Crash and the depression in the 1930s. The best responses were able to deal with both ends of the period with sufficient support.

Less successful responses tended to adopt a narrative approach, often describing events such as the Jarrow March or the 1926 General Strike without clearly linking them to government action or evaluating the effectiveness of policy. Some students concentrated more on describing economic difficulties than on examining how governments tried to address them. In several cases limited understanding of economic policy or terminology made it harder for students to build sustained arguments. Economic illiteracy, as noted by examiners, hindered the clarity and effectiveness of the analysis in a number of scripts.

Where government action was discussed, it was often confined to only a small number of familiar examples — such as Churchill’s return to the Gold Standard in 1925, the benefit cuts and the Special Areas Act under the National Government. This led to some quite limited responses in terms of the range. For instance, policies associated with the National Government in the mid-1930s such as interest rate reductions, housebuilding, protectionism, and rearmament were often omitted in many responses. Stronger answers showed greater range and balance. These students were able to examine both interwar decades and compare differing government strategies, while also recognising variation in outcome across regions and sectors. They often noted that while some policies brought stability or modest recovery — especially in the South and Midlands — other areas remained in long-term economic decline.

Question 4

Most students demonstrated a solid understanding of the Beveridge Report and its five “giants,” with confident coverage of the post-war Labour government and the early years of Churchill’s Conservative administration. Responses frequently discussed the creation of the NHS, the National Insurance Act, the Butler Education Act, and housebuilding initiatives. These sections were generally well handled and familiar to most students.

However, many responses focused heavily upon the years 1945 to the early 1950s, often giving little attention to the later part of the period. For example, where the 1950s were mentioned, it was usually in the context of housing, with only passing reference to other policy developments. Education and social mobility were often addressed only in terms of the Butler Act, with limited exploration of the structural issues within the tripartite system or the long-term limitations it created. One notable omission in a number of responses was the principle of full employment, which was central to Beveridge’s vision and remained a guiding aim of governments until the early 1960s. Its relative success, especially compared to the interwar years, was not always recognised. As a result, many essays did not fully explore the extent to which the aims of the Beveridge Report were achieved across the entire timeframe.

Further, while most responses were able to describe the key reforms, fewer analysed how far they aligned with Beveridge’s aims, or considered the extent to which initial progress was maintained. For example, some mentioned rising NHS costs and the introduction of prescription charges but did not fully develop the implications of this for Beveridge’s ideal of universal, free healthcare.

Stronger responses were more thematic in structure, assessing change over time. These students were more likely to recognise the role of consensus politics in maintaining support for Beveridge-inspired reforms across both Labour and Conservative governments. The best answers also evaluated why some aims were more fully realised than others and considered how far the vision of a comprehensive welfare state had been achieved by 1964.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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