



A Level **History**

7042/1F

Report on the examination

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General

Student responses to this paper included some strong examples of answers to all four of the questions; most students understood fully what they were being asked to do with the essays and were able to produce well-balanced analysis on the subject material. Generally, students demonstrated a reasonable understanding of the contextual knowledge of the period. Students could explain key themes within this unit, specifically economic policy, the consequences of industrialisation, and the growth of radical movements. Students appreciated that over time, there were often significant changes in society, attitudes and the role of the government.

Most students understood the requirements of the questions and could, to a reasonable degree, organise their ideas into clear and well-structured arguments culminating in a judgement. Less convincing responses relied on description to provide responses to the questions and did not always allow the opportunity for the specifics of the individual questions to guide their response. In some cases, students wrote a significant amount, with a broad range of supporting detail, but did not link this knowledge to the specifics of the question.

Question 1

Students often responded to this question reasonably well. On the whole, students engaged well with the extracts, with at least reasonable understanding of the arguments being made. Most students could identify some of the differing arguments contained within each extract.

Some students did find the concept of “Gladstone’s leadership” a complicated term to evaluate as part of the extracts; some focused on his strength, a small number used his rivalry with Disraeli, there was reference to Ireland and his role in the creation of Liberalism. Most students understood that the question required students to evaluate each argument and were clear on their use of “convincing” and “less convincing”. Many students structured their work in an effective manner – referring to the extracts in isolation and making clear judgements on the interpretations provided.

Extract A:

All students were able to highlight the comment on Gladstone’s strength as a leader; some students made a comment on the impact of his personality although many students did not comment on his religious nature. Most students highlighted the reference about his skills as a speaker, some made a comment on his election campaigns, use of transport and mass speeches. The growing enthusiasm for Democracy was evidenced in his electoral reforms. The comment on “biggest beast in the forest” was highlighted by some as reference to his rivalry with Disraeli. Most students found areas to support and challenge, although the challenge aspect was done less frequently.

Extract B:

The role of Gladstone creating Liberalism was a concept some students struggled with. Some of the strongest answers were able to see it was product of the times; socially, economically and politically. Some students commented on the diverse nature of the political concept; and used this as evidence that Gladstone could unite them. The “moral opinions of the age” was rarely used as comment on his leadership of the party. Many students could challenge the wording of “little, if any direct involvement in creation of domestic policy” – although few were able to support the comment on “financial reform”. Some students did confuse some of the legislation passed by Disraeli and instead credited Gladstone with the Artisan Dwelling Act.

Extract C:

This was the extract that most students found challenging to extract the arguments; many did not comment on the Liberals who did not like this leadership. The use of the term “conservative” was either ignored by candidates, or not fully understood.

Most candidates could talk about Gladstone’s prioritisation of Ireland, although not all students could explain why this issue was such a focus for him; many students could talk about the legislation that was passed and there was some reference to the groups campaigning for legislation.

Overall, the quality of supporting information across all three extracts was varied; most students have a solid understanding of Gladstone, but few fully understood his contribution to Liberalism and the motivation behind his policies.

Question 2

This question was answered reasonably well – students could talk about the industrial developments that improved and worsened the life of the workers. Some students provided an overview of the industrial developments of the time without a specific analytical link to the question.

Most students took the line of argument that life did not improve – and used urbanisation, the development of the factory system and poverty as evidence to support the decline in quality of life. Some students were able to identify that the replacement with full time work that was not seasonal as an example of positive change; and some made reference to the factory owners who provided better opportunities, housing and education.

Some students did provide a narrative account of the changes in quality and of life and many students opted to talk about economic policy and the impact of Pitt’s legislation on the quality of life; some of these students provided an overview of the legislation without making a clear link to the impact on lives of workers. Many students used the example of Luddites to demonstrate the replacement of skilled workers with machinery.

Question 3

Most students took the line of argument that agriculture was not the reason for change; many students talked about enclosure, crop rotation, but many did not demonstrate a strong understanding of the relationship between industry and agriculture. There were examples of stronger responses on the increases in yield and therefore urbanisation, but many students dismissed agriculture as a factor and put forward arguments on cotton and iron. Some students also used the role of government policy as the driver for change; reduction of tariffs and the economic changes brought about through legislation.

Question 4

This question was popular with students, and it was mostly completed to a good standard; most students had a good knowledge of the types of government pressure from outside parliament and most could explain that, specifically in the early period, those groups were met with repression. Most students could identify cases such as Catholic Emancipation, the Great Reform Act and the repeal of the Corn Laws as examples of a different type of response; the strongest of answers were able to make a judgement on the type of outside pressure and the government reaction; middle class, not violent as opposed to worker rebellion.

The breadth of this answer was strong with many groups being identified and the government response being demonstrated; judgements and organisation were secure with this specific topic material. A small number of students did not make the differentiation between outside and inside pressure, so some of the examples they provided were not fully convincing.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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