

GCSE
History
8145/2B/X

Report on the examination

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2B/A Norman England, c1066–c1100

Question 1

Students found the Interpretation straightforward. Most students demonstrated knowledge about this interpretation based upon their own understanding. A few students reworked the Interpretation while adding little original knowledge. This was surprising given recent examination questions about towns in Norman England. It was important for students to connect what they knew with the interpretation directly, rather than merely assert something about towns under the Normans. A few students made speculative comments about the author that were not rewarded.

At Level 1, students were rewarded who showed an understanding of what the Interpretation was saying or paraphrased it. Some made basic assertions about the growth of towns or that they were associated with trade but offered no explanation or knowledge in support. Many students still wrote that they agreed with the Interpretation 'from my own knowledge' but did not add any. There were answers at this level which asserted that the interpretation was unconvincing because it did not mention something about which the student knew. These answers were very rarely related to what was in the interpretation. Some also argued that the source was unconvincing because it was adapted or because Huscroft, the author, was writing such a long time after the event.

At Level 2, many students began to explain in simple terms about the growth of towns in Norman England. They were rewarded for giving the aspects of the Norman towns which made them flourish and drew people from the surrounding countryside to them. Many students were rewarded at Level 2 for their knowledge of the agricultural system of the medieval village. Some had detailed knowledge about the architecture and housing in the villages. Many students stated that the agricultural work undertaken by many peasants was the same before and after the Conquest. However, some students noted that the introduction of Forest Laws changed the nutrition and diet of the peasantry.

Students at Level 3 and 4 often showed their understanding of the Interpretation by applying their knowledge and understanding of the economic advantages of the growth in towns under Norman rule. Students frequently explained the attraction of the markets and how they often had the advantage of a Royal Charter. Towns were named along with the way in which they had gained a reputation for certain products, for example salt, fish, leather working, jewellery, or woodworking. It was notable that many students referred to specific ports and towns that benefited from an increase in European trade and the commodities involved. There were frequent mentions of the wool trade with Flanders and the import of wine from France. Some excellent answers at Level 3 and 4 detailed the importance of the Guild system in the Norman town. A small number of students impressed examiners with their understanding of the beginnings of an urban elite in the Norman towns. Many recognised that this group of people lived a very different life from that which most peasants experienced in villages. A few students made perceptive comments about how, although the working life of most peasants remained the same, there were changes to the Norman aristocracy for which they worked. These observations demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the social transformations occurring during this period.

Question 2

Most students showed knowledge about the Domesday book. At Level 1, students tended to make some basic points about the book being a record of possessions or land. Many students at a basic level stated that it was a book about tax. It was at Level 1 and 2 that students' answers were about what the Domesday book was.

At Level 2, students most frequently stated that it was a book about gathering or raising taxation. In general terms, answers explained that the aim of the book was to increase the amount of taxation that the king could collect or that he should be given what he was owed. It was often suggested that the book made it more difficult for people to avoid paying the taxation they were obliged to provide. At Level 2, it was usually implicit why taxation should be of importance to the King. Answers that were rewarded at Level 2 made little mention of what the king would do with tax once he had collected it or why he should concern himself with such a detailed inventory of the country he had conquered. Several students who were rewarded at Level 2 demonstrated knowledge of how the Domesday book survey was conducted and commented about how commissioners were sent around England to record land and possessions. Students at all levels of the mark scheme knew when the Domesday book was created.

It was a characteristic of answers at Levels 3 and 4 that students began to address the issue of why the Domesday book was important. Many students impressed examiners with their understanding of why the taxation he received was important and explained that the wealth the King gained could be used to pay for an army to resist invasion, for example from Scandinavia or France. Some answers were more precise and explained how the Domesday book enabled the king to know how many soldiers and knights he could expect to raise through feudal obligation. Students also showed good knowledge of how a record of landownership would help to resolve disputes in the courts. This knowledge was often linked to an understanding of primogeniture. Some of the lengthier answers were concerned with the value of the Domesday book to show the changes in the feudal system achieved by the Norman Conquest. This perspective on the Domesday book was frequently supported with knowledge about how landownership had changed in the 20 years since the Conquest. Students knew who occupied important positions and understood the distribution of landownership. A good number of students based their argument around the value of the Domesday Book to the historian who was interested in the changes to the social and political hierarchy in England and the impact of the Harrying of the North. A small number of answers developed a Level 2 point about the Domesday survey not being comprehensive. They were able to explain that parts of the North of England were omitted and gave reasons for this, as were parts of London and Winchester.

Question 3

In general, examiners found this question to be successfully answered by most students. Examiners were able to reward at Level 1 students who wrote about the different revolts that occurred during the period 1067-1075. These tended to be basic points of knowledge, often about the Harrying of the North.

At Level 2, it was common to see answers which described the Harrying in some detail or the Revolt of the Norman earls. Students who chose to write about the Harrying often provided considerable detail of the events that led up to it. There were a few answers which covered the rebellion of Edric the Wild, and rebellion in the South-west of England early in the reign. Some answers at Level 2 did analyse the question and identified in a simple way how these revolts were dealt with. These answers usually focused on the understanding that William dealt with rebellion by using violence or extreme measures.

At Levels 3 and 4, students addressed the question more directly in terms of how rebellion was dealt with. There were two main ideas explained, namely violence, and castle building. The violent response was often exemplified through what happened during the Harrying of the North. Some students said that William dealt with revolt using 'scorched earth tactics.' Examiners were impressed with the understanding shown about how these methods led to acceptance of Norman rule. Castle building featured prominently in answers, with many good examples deployed. Students were able to use their understanding of the value of castles at strategic points and in urban settings. A few answers suggested that the creation of Marcher earldoms along the Welsh border and the installation of a Prince-Bishop in Durham was also another method of dealing with or preventing rebellion. Examiners were accommodating of this suggestion because, as some students pointed out, Welsh insurgency often stirred up English support as well. Some students also said that Northumbria had strategic importance as a buffer zone between Scotland and any Scandinavian incursion, as well as the reputation the Northumbrian nobility had for resenting Norman authority, so the presence of the Prince-Bishop and his castle were important ways to deal with any threat to Norman control.

Question 4

Students answered this question well. It was clear that they had made good use of the Historic Environment Resource Pack. Students structured their responses clearly. Students knew about Durham Cathedral and the various ways in which it made an impression on all who saw it.

At Level 1, it was common in answers to see basic knowledge of the main features of the Cathedral or its location. Some students took the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the reasons why the English church needed reform.

At Level 2, students began to consider the different ways in which it might impress the Anglo-Saxons. Answers made the point that it would impress because the architecture and scale of the Cathedral was something that the Anglo-Saxons would not have seen and was very different from the Cathedral that preceded it. Many students took the opportunity at Level 2 to identify and briefly explain some of the defensive features of the location of the Cathedral.

These usually involved the river location and height of the site. However, many students incorrectly suggested that the cathedral itself was a military site and failed to give appropriate recognition to the defensive role of the Castle and Bailey.

At Level 3, many students understood that there were different ways in which the Cathedral could 'impress.' It was more usual at Level 3 to see a thorough and developed explanation of the strategic importance of the castle and cathedral and its location in the north of England. Students were aware that the North was an area of rebellion and threat to the Normans. The North might also pose other external threats from Scotland or Scandinavia. At Level 4, students carefully explained how the North of England might act as a buffer zone to protect the South. This was often compared to the Welsh Marches. Examiners were pleased to see that many students at Level 3 understood the importance of the role of the Prince-Bishop and the special powers and rights that he had to mint coin, raise an army, and levy taxes.

There was good knowledge at Level 3 of the religious motives for constructing such an impressive structure at Durham. Students noted that the Pope had given the papal banner to support William in the Conquest of England and secured, in return, the promise of reform in the English church. Several students also suggested that religious devotion might also in some way atone for the devastation and death brought about by the Harrying of the North. There was impressive knowledge of Saint Cuthbert and his relics. Students recognised that his shrine would represent an attractive destination for pilgrims, which in turn would be of economic benefit to the area. At Level 4, it was common for students to argue that the principal motive for the building of the cathedral was religious and that the Normans were pious. However, it was frequently pointed out that their piety as expressed in Durham Cathedral also served to impress or intimidate the English.

2B/B Medieval England: the reign of Edward I, 1272–1307

Question 1

The interpretation proved readily accessible to students. A variety of words and phrases enabled students to expand upon their responses, thereby demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of the topic. Phrases such as 'listening to the concerns of his people' and 'increased taxation' formed the most common focus for responses. At Level 1, students quoted or paraphrased the interpretation. Recognisable words and phrases included the above examples, plus 'strengthened the role', 'people's problems', 'discussed' and 'Edward also benefitted'.

Responses at Level 2 began to incorporate students' own knowledge with reference to one of the key phrases. For instance, 'listening to the concerns of his people' elicited reference to the Hundred Rolls, while 'used Parliament to gain support' generated discussion of increased representation. At this level, the main Parliaments of 1275 and 1295 were mentioned but often lacked clarity regarding what took place and who was present.

Some students continued to comment on provenance, which received no credit. However, no student appeared to focus exclusively on provenance, nor did any student deviate from the interpretation.

Responses at Levels 3 and 4 began to employ students' own knowledge with reference to one, two or three key parliamentary sessions: the first session in 1275, the 1283 session at Acton Burnell, and the Model Parliament of 1295. These were frequently approached in chronological order, and students demonstrated understanding of what took place or was distinctive about these parliaments. For example, 800 people attended Edward's first Parliament, and the Model Parliament divided lords and commoners. Developed responses explored the implications of having 800 people present in Parliament or examined the effects of the Model Parliament divided between Lords and Commoners. Students also explored how Edward listened to his people through the issuing of Statutes and the reform of the law-and-order system to reduce corruption. Developed responses further explored taxation with reference to the Expulsion of the Jews in return for Parliament granting Edward funds in 1290. Complex Level 4 responses focused on the relationship between Edward and his Parliament and the shift in power between the two, often developing from commentary about the Expulsion of the Jews.

Question 2

There was much knowledge which could have been applied to this question, although responses mainly focused on the barons and Wales. Other problems included debt, France, land, and the legacy of Henry III's reign. Responses tended to follow a straightforward structure, such as 'One problem Edward faced was Wales and it was important because..., another problem Edward faced was... and it was important because...'. This approach meant students' answers remained clearly focused on the question, often resulting in one problem per paragraph. The awarding of marks depended simply on the level of detail and explanation achieved.

Basic Level 1 responses tended to mention that Edward inherited debt or that there was a poor relationship with the barons, and Wales, with no further development. Level 2 responses began to focus on specific detail and explanation. For example, Edward inherited a poor relationship with the barons which he needed to address because they seemed to possess excessive power and he required their cooperation. From this foundation, developed responses readily explored the nature of the relationship between Edward and his barons, examining the need to dilute their power and how Edward achieved this objective. Similarly, when debt formed the focus, developed responses examined the need for taxation and Edward's solution of introducing the wool tax instead of imposing additional taxation on the barons while attempting to appease them. Well-developed responses identified connections between two or more problems.

Students demonstrated sound chronological understanding of the problem with Wales and could cite it as a developing issue from the Treaty of Montgomery to Llewellyn's refusal to pay homage to Edward, the resulting invasion of Wales in 1277, as Edward demonstrated that he was not a weak king. Level 4 responses tended to explore the relationship between Edward and the barons with focus on Edward's attempts to assert royal authority. The Statute of Gloucester was often cited as key legislation. This approach was also evident in Edward's attempts to eliminate corruption in the court system and his acquisition of land through Quo

Warranto. These elements were mentioned at lower levels, but understanding of their connection to the challenges to Edward's authority elicited higher marks.

No credit was awarded to responses that referred to events outside the question parameters, specifically post-1280s events, as the question referred to problems when Edward became king.

Question 3

A greater number of students did not attempt this question compared with previous years. If question 4 was answered first in the examination, this would make question 3 the final question to be answered, which may have disadvantaged it. This was disappointing as this represented a straightforward question. Responses to this question were clearly divided into two parts as students wrote about the two invasions and then considered the non-military aspects of how Edward conquered Wales.

Students began their responses with the two campaigns of 1277 and 1282, respectively. Most students demonstrated sound chronological understanding of the events and moved smoothly from 1277 to 1282 with Dafydd's betrayal and Edward forced to mount a second invasion. Students were able to describe the invasions in considerable detail, from the taking of Anglesey forcing Llewellyn's surrender to the Declaration of Defiance to the Battle of Orewin Bridge. Level 1 responses demonstrated knowledge of the basics about Edward's army being stronger than Llewellyn's, and Level 2 responses expanded upon the description of the invasions. Castles might also be mentioned at this level but only in terms of 'Edward won the war and built some castles to secure his position'. A small amount of confusion between the Welsh brothers occurred, and even a mention of Scotland appeared in evidence.

By Level 3, students were producing more detailed analysis of the invasions rather than simply writing about the events in chronological order. For example, students recognised the importance of Edward securing Gwynedd and building Caernarfon Castle there. At this level, the non-military aspects of Edward conquering Wales were explored, or the long-term effects of Edward's actions. The Statute of Rhuddlan was cited as the pivotal moment when Edward took over Wales completely with the imposition of English laws in Wales. Castles formed a common focus, with them being built as both a physical and psychological reminder of Edward's conquest. This led to discussion of bastides and then the treatment of the Welsh in their own country. The change in vocabulary heralded the move to more complex responses with terms such as 'subjugation', 'colonisation', 'anglicising' and the sad reflection that Wales only existed in poetry from this point onwards.

Students focused on 'why' the invasions took place to a greater or lesser extent, but this served as a precursor to 'how' Edward conquered Wales, with students feeling the need to place the initial invasion of 1277 in context.

Question 4

Generally, students answered this question well and reaching Level 3 proved straightforward. The Historic Environment Resource pack had clearly been utilised with numerous references to the variety of features Stokesay Castle possessed. All students focused on the factor stated in the question: security and protection. Another common factor was the display of wealth,

which was often coupled with status but not explored as a separate factor. Location also formed a key factor in students' reasoning.

The stated reference to security and protection in the question immediately focused students' responses on how Stokesay would provide this. At Level 1, students cited the 'thick walls', the moat and the towers. At Level 2, students explained the need for security and protection, and this tended to focus on Lawrence of Ludlow being a rich man who needed to protect his money from theft. Reference might also be made to the outlaws and robbers roaming the Shropshire countryside or the possibility of the Welsh rebelling again. Additional features would also be mentioned, such as the 'strong room' or grilles on the windows. If students disagreed and chose to focus on Stokesay being a display of wealth, then a different list of features would be described: Great Hall, large glass windows, encaustic tiles, wooden staircase.

Level 3 and 4 responses began to analyse additional reasons such as displaying wealth or the location of Stokesay in terms of economic gain. Evidence of judgements being made regarding the importance of factors began to appear and became prevalent by Level 4. Comments were made about individual features and their practical application, for instance, large windows let in light and represented a sign of wealth but were unable to withstand an attack. Additionally, differences were identified between a raid by robbers and a siege by the Welsh, and this was linked to the features of Stokesay Castle. Those features that would withstand military action were distinguished from those that would resist criminal action.

Reference to location as a factor was linked to wealth and the use of Stokesay as a trade 'hub' for business to facilitate the growth of the wool trade and Lawrence of Ludlow's personal wealth. It was also linked to the security and protection factor with the knowledge that the Castle was located near the border with Wales. Higher level responses identified the change in tension as Edward pacified the Welsh post-1284, and the significance of the licensed fortifications in 1291 was often cited as an example of a display of wealth, with the view that the crenelations were ornamental rather than functional by this time. The crenelations were a key feature for students who explored status as a factor for building Stokesay Castle. Status was often coupled with wealth but not frequently explored separately. Students who did explore the nature of status and the emerging merchant class that Ludlow represented showed complex understanding of why Stokesay Castle might have been built. They highlighted what was signified by the close relationship between Edward and a merchant and the differences in the feudal system now becoming increasingly apparent. All students made mention of Stokesay, although some minor confusion existed as to whether Stokesay was Lawrence's, Robert's, or Edward's castle.

2B/C Elizabethan England, c1568–1603

Question 1

This question presented some difficulty for students, which was surprising given how central the topic of poverty is to a study of the period. The interpretation provided a wealth of indicative detail which might have been developed further by students who possessed a good depth of knowledge, or by students who could identify specific factual support. Examples included the names of towns that had developed their own approach to the treatment of poverty. At the highest level, there were some impressive responses that detailed the provisions of the Elizabethan Poor Laws and were able to provide commentary on their efficacy. Typically, these responses moved beyond general commentary about workhouses, or more specifically Houses of Correction, and were able to identify why there was a need for change. These responses accurately identified and developed aspects of the Poor Laws that addressed these problems. There was in addition some excellent and detailed commentary on how Ipswich and York in particular, had developed local responses to the problems presented by poverty. This was often combined with good knowledge of the issue of vagrancy in the period and discussion of the different types of vagrants encountered.

The strongest answers were able to deploy this knowledge in support of a clear and sustained evaluation providing a judgement on how convincing the interpretation was felt to be. Less impressive responses relied upon general knowledge which might reasonably have applied to the consideration of poverty in any period. At this level there was speculative commentary about the impact of poverty on family life and even the issue of unemployment, but this was not supported by any detail that might be considered specific to the Elizabethan period. Indeed, it was clear that some students attempted to deploy knowledge more appropriate to nineteenth century industrial Britain. The weakest responses tended to simply paraphrase the content, perhaps being able to define terms such as famine or inflation but little beyond that. There unfortunately remained a number of responses that mentioned what the interpretation did not cover. This sort of argument by omission accrued no marks. It was far better for the student to think along the lines of finding two or more clear points put forward in the interpretation and to then offer an interrogation of those points using specific knowledge of the period in support of judgement. It should be noted that far fewer references to provenance were seen this year. Provenance was not relevant to this question.

At Level 1, responses were characterised by generalised paraphrasing of the content of the interpretation. Consequently, there was little evidence that the historical points made in the interpretation were understood and the response advanced little beyond a straightforward extraction of unconnected themes or ideas about aspects of the period. In answers at Level 2, there was much more secure evidence that the interpretation had been understood. Some contextual knowledge was used to support a simple evaluation connected to any aspect of poverty raised in the interpretation. At Level 3 there was more sophistication to the evaluation with good, specific subject knowledge used that was keenly focused on the issue of poverty across two or more factors. By Level 4 knowledge and quotation was used with the clear purpose of arriving at a judgement about the ways in which the interpretation was

convincing about poverty in Elizabethan England. This moved beyond an assertive sentence along the lines of '...and so the interpretation was convincing' but the response worked as a sustained judgement across two or more aspects of the interpretation.

Question 2

This question functioned effectively, especially in allowing those students that had a good knowledge of the Armada to demonstrate the range and depth of this understanding. Unfortunately, a considerable number of students plainly had no knowledge of the Armada, although almost all were at least able to identify it as something linked to seafaring. The question tested students' ability to identify something linked to the events of the Armada and to add some supporting material to this. As in previous years, the strongest answers were those that could link the identified event to the broader context of the period, and thereby provide an explanation of importance rather than simply a description. Students explained the importance of the Armada in the context of the broader Spanish threat or commonly in the religious context of the period. A considerable number were able to explain how victory against the Armada contributed to the reputation of Elizabeth and how it was used to consolidate her popularity. In addition, a good proportion of students were able to comment on the Protestant Wind. Weaker responses were somewhat confused by chronology, for example arguing that the Armada was important as its objective was to place Mary Queen of Scots on the throne. A surprising number of responses placed the Armada in the New World and viewed it as part of the story of settlement.

At Level 1, students gave basic undeveloped answers. Here, the most typical response briefly identified the Armada as something involving seafaring. In answers rewarded at Level 2 there was more detail, although again little attempt to move beyond the descriptive. In most examples this involved identifying the Armada as an invasion force and possibly giving some supporting detail about the individuals involved. At Level 3 there was consideration of more than one aspect, often the motivation behind the Armada or some extensive detail about the Battle of Gravelines and the use of fireships. This level of remembered detail was usually impressive. At Level 4, there was a range of aspects, as seen at Level 3, but crucially this was combined with a clear judgement about importance. Often this meant placing the stated element within a broader historical context which included the Treaty of Nonsuch, events in the Netherlands or the subsequent use of the Armada by Elizabeth to cement her popularity.

Question 3

This question proved highly accessible. Given the subject matter it might have been expected that this, as opposed to questions on poverty or the Armada, would prove more challenging but this was not the case. Many students were able to link the various plots against Elizabeth to some form of dissatisfaction with the religious settlement, and here it was the student that was able to name specific plots and to make explicit links to the threat to the religious settlement that tended to perform well. A considerable number demonstrated alternative approaches where, for example, students mentioned the Jesuit threat, Douai, and specifically Campion. Unfortunately, some responses had not considered carefully enough the precise

demands of the question and simply gave a detailed description of the religious settlement. It was often the strongest responses that were able to make developed links between factors, for example explaining how Elizabeth's initial approach was largely an accommodationist one, but detailing how this changed over time perhaps as a result of threats led from abroad. The changing nature of the threat was a common and well-argued point made by many students.

At Level 1, students simply identified a relevant event, often the Babington Plot. There was little further detail and certainly no appreciation of how this threatened the Elizabethan religious settlement. In answers at Level 2, there was more development of a single plot, or generalised commentary about the nature of the threat. By Level 3 and 4 there was not only greater detail but also a clear narrative of linked factors and plots possibly identifying how key events such as Elizabeth's excommunication or the arrival of Mary changed the nature of the threat. Some students offered impressive detail about how the nature of the threat shifted over time, and how important the support of foreign agencies was in developing this threat.

Question 4

As in previous years, there were some detailed responses to this historic environment question, occasionally running to several sides in length. Less common was the ability to utilise this obvious knowledge to demonstrate understanding of the site by developing a clear opinion or judgement in relation to the set question. It remained helpful advice for students not to view this question as simply an exercise in factual recall but rather to remember that knowledge should be used for a purpose. By far the most common reference was the use of glass at Hardwick and how this illustrated considerable wealth. There were also some impressive descriptions of the type of artwork to be found inside Hardwick and reference was often made to the loggia and the influence of Renaissance themes. There was detailed evidence of comprehensive reading of the resource pack.

To access the higher levels, students were expected to consider a range of possible factors that might explain why Hardwick Hall was developed. Students identified the need to impress in conjunction with a desire to show social mobility, possibly linking this to demonstration of the Great Chain of Being through the architectural design of Hardwick. Occasionally other factors included a desire to advertise or to promote Bess' own industries or to demonstrate a cultural or international awareness perhaps by employing foreign architects or displaying textiles from overseas. Some students referred to Bess' desire to impress Elizabeth and the disappointment that the queen never visited.

Level 1 marks were often given to answers which tended to ignore the focus of the statement and simply described, in a general manner, some of the features at Hardwick. This was often limited to the identification of a large number of rooms or description of the gardens that might reasonably be stated of any large house of the period. In answers rewarded at Level 2 answers were in the main characterised by a brief mention of a variety of relevant features specific to Hardwick, sometimes the use of glass or mention of the long gallery or of the staircase. However, this was almost exclusively couched in terms of the need to impress and, as such lacked a range of factors necessary to advance higher.

Level 3 rewarded responses included a good level of detail of features specific to Hardwick, but placed this within a range of factors, for example the need to impress and the desire to

show social progression or the desire to show learning and culture. Level 4 answers replicated the degree of detail and understanding brought to the Level 3 responses, but were shaped to present a judgement based on evidence and reasoning.

2B/D Restoration England, 1660–1685

General comments

In general, students found this an accessible paper, with noticeably fewer questions being ‘not attempted’ in comparison with 2024. Across all questions, many students were able to produce responses with simple explanations, allowing an award of a level 2 mark and there were some outstanding answers, notably for question two. There is still evidence of chronological inaccuracy and confusion between eras, often influenced by what was studied for Part A of the paper. It was clear from responses to questions one and two, that some students are unclear about key terms and there was, for example, confusion between Court, Parliament, and the Privy Council.

Question 1

This question was an opportunity for students to demonstrate their own knowledge, with reference to the phrases in the source. There were several aspects of the quotation that students could pick up on, for example, the inequality between men and women; the patriarchal society; problems accessing education and the professions; the greater freedom for wealthy women; opportunities for actresses and business opportunities. Expanding on just two of these aspects, if sufficiently complex, was sufficient to attract full marks. Almost all students focussed on the idea of actresses experiencing greater freedoms. The more successful answers developed this with specific examples, such as referring to Behn’s plays and income stream and by going on to explain that whilst having financial independence, actresses were exploited and might be seen as prostitutes.

There were many good responses. Examiners were looking for specific examples and detail in order to award higher levels. The stronger students were likely to acknowledge that, whilst things changed for some, for many women, they still had little freedom. One way of reaching the higher levels might be to discuss how named women at court could wield political power, as those seeking patronage approached them because of their influence over Charles. Alternatively, they might refer to Aphra Behn using her plays to make political points, or taking on the non-traditional role of being a spy.

A few considered the role of the Catherine of Braganza and this was credited.

There was no necessity for students to discuss why the source was not convincing and such comments were rarely creditworthy beyond level one at best. There is no credit for considering provenance in this question and this year, it was pleasing to see that fewer students seemed to be wasting time discussing this.

There were a number of generic answers, which would have been equally accurate had the question asked about the nineteenth century. These were very unlikely to be raised out of level 1. Other responses relied heavily on paraphrasing the quotation, without employing their own knowledge and therefore could not be rewarded beyond level one.

Question 2

Overall, this question was where the most high-quality answers could be found, with plenty of students reaching levels 3 or 4. There were several aspects of the relationship between Charles II and Parliament that could be focussed on. These included, conflicts over money, foreign policy, religion, and the succession, as well as referring to the changing balance of power compared to previous rulers.

Descriptive accounts of Charles' relationship with Parliament were awarded at levels 1 or 2. To reach higher levels, students needed to address the impact of these issues, with specific reference to Acts of Parliament and measures such as the Declaration of Breda and the Stop of the Exchequer. For the highest marks, students were expected to explain briefly what these measures did and the consequences for the relationship between Charles and Parliament, rather than just referring to an Act of Parliament by name. Many students did this successfully, developing comments about differing religious outlooks by describing the Clarendon Code or the Test Act and going on to explain the impact that this had on the succession. Level 3 and 4 students who considered finance as an area of conflict, mentioned the necessity for Charles to compromise on his promises in the Declaration of Breda and the proroguing of Parliament that was made financially viable by the Treaty of Dover.

Some students focussed on Charles I's experiences and the Interregnum. Whilst it was possible to make this relevant with comments along the lines of, 'it was important for Charles II to have a good relationship with Parliament so that he didn't suffer the same fate as his father', there was sometimes too much focus on this, to the detriment of writing about the Restoration period.

Question 3

This was a straightforward question, focussing on a part of the specification that is normally popular with students. Despite this, in some cases, it was unsuccessfully done. Apart from some confusion with the Black Death and occasionally with the nineteenth century Cholera outbreaks, a number of students wrote at length about the causes, rather than the consequences, of the plague. To be creditworthy, a discussion of causes had to be linked to the resulting preventatives or treatments and some students did do this.

There was plenty of scope to consider the impact of the plague and many students were able to make developed points about the consequences for both individuals and the country. A common way of reaching higher levels, was by writing about the economic effects, with references to the quarantining of ships and the fall in income from the cloth trade in Colchester, going on to discuss consequent impact on the ability to fund the Dutch wars. Other students focussed on the impact on medical ideas and how methods such as quarantine were used in later epidemics. The rise of anti-Catholic feeling and the

consequences of this, as well as looking at the impact on the reputation of the royal family, perhaps contrasting this with the Great Fire of London, were other aspects that students picked up on. Weaker responses did not go beyond numbers of casualties, often with widely varying estimates, or no specific data at all.

Question 4

This was generally well done, with many students submitting developed responses that reached at least level three. Apart from the king's interest in science, other motivating factors for the building of the Royal Observatory that were discussed included economic factors and the importance of trade; navigation and the quest for longitude; the influence of individuals such as Boyle, Wren, Flamsteed and Moore; foreign competition and a general interest in science.

It was clear that many students were prepared to write about longitude and foreign competition but were less able to adapt what they had learned to the 'King's interest in science,' falling back on a pre-learned account of a more widespread general interest in science.

For marks at the upper end of level 3, at least two, often three, aspects were discussed in some detail. For example, when writing about longitude, students might be expected to mention why it was relevant and refer to the inadequacies of dead reckoning, the impact of foreign competition and the role of Flamsteed and St. Pierre.

Many students still struggle with the substantiated judgement required for level four. It is not sufficient to begin the final paragraph with the words 'In conclusion,' followed by a reiteration of what had been written previously, or an expansion of previous points. There needs to be a clear judgement about which is the most significant factor and, more importantly, why. This was in this case best achieved by considering the factors in relation to each other, perhaps explaining why, without the chosen factor, the other factors alone would not have led to the building of the Royal Observatory. In some instances, suitable concluding paragraphs could not be rewarded at level four because what preceded them was not sufficiently developed. Simple explanations, with no development, followed by a satisfactory conclusion, might only receive reward at level 2.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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