



A-level **History**

7042/1B

Report on the Examination

7042
June 2024

Version: 1.0

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General

There were many students who were demonstrably well prepared with considerable knowledge and were able to express themselves with enthusiasm, and overall, it was evident that subject knowledge of the areas of focus in the examination paper was good.

The breadth nature of the component allowed students to show contextual and conceptual understanding within the assessment objectives in both a positive and determined way. Section A, Question 01, addressing AO3 focused on reform of the Spanish Church under Philip II. Many students offered extensive contextual own knowledge in support of their understanding and evaluation of the arguments presented within the three extracts.

There remained an element of avoiding the specific interpretations within the extracts whilst concentrating, in some cases, on wider context, lacking a more balanced approach. Section B, Questions 02, 03 and 04 reflected a range of key questions where students could access appropriate choices. There was consequently a pleasing spread and range of answers. Question 02 allowed students to address a range of economic issues in order to show their knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of Spain's economy under Ferdinand and Isabella. Question 02 was very popular as expected and many students demonstrated precise and specific knowledge, though this was not always applied consistently to the question.

Question 03 considered the extent of change and continuity in the government of Spain, 1522-1556. Again, there was some excellent recall of knowledge, though some students did not demonstrate sufficient understanding of the question or had a tendency to describe various aspects of government and government policy.

Question 04 offered students the opportunity to analyse and evaluate the extent to which Philip had achieved his aims in relation to the Ottoman Turks in the Mediterranean. Most showed an ability to think across the full date range, selecting relevant examples. Fewer students answered this question overall, with most opting for 2 and 3. Many answers showed a good understanding of the question and an appropriate focus on this aspect of foreign policy, although some had focused too greatly on one or two events (Battle of Lepanto) and were therefore too narrow in range for breadth question.

Question One

Students were required to evaluate three separate extracts in relation to reform of the Church by Philip II. They had to assess the extent to which the interpretations were convincing by drawing on contextual knowledge to corroborate and challenge (as appropriate) the arguments presented by Parker, Woodward and Dunne. They were not asked to make comparisons between the extracts, nor were they required to offer comment on provenance, tone or bias, but some did. Students were not rewarded, but equally not penalised for having done so. The answer did not require an introduction nor an overall conclusion, however some concluding evaluation in relation to the question was helpful in meeting the criteria for the higher levels

Some students failed to address the overall argument presented within the extract, focusing instead on a narrow point or piece of evidence that wasn't necessarily relevant. Students should be aware that they should only comment on the arguments and evidence presented in the extracts, rather than making comments on how convincing an extract is on the basis of what it does not say. The evidence within the

extracts must be addressed as part of the answer, the inability to do so can place an answer in a maximum level 3. It is also important for students to address the topic, which follows the “in relation to” in the question and then assimilate the whole extract before starting to write. Students should be mindful that the key argument of an extract is not necessarily in the first line.

In Extract A, most students were able to identify the argument that although the Spanish Church was in need of reform, little progress had been made by 1598. The best responses here were able to evaluate the extent to which the Church needed reform, as well Philip’s attitude to reform and the extent to which progress had been made. Most students found this the most challenging of the three extracts to analyse, with many falling back on descriptions of features or issues within the Church.

Extract B took a positive stance on religious reform, focussing on the significance of the Tridentine Reforms, and the increase in royal control over the Church. Better responses were able to analyse and evaluate the argument put forward by Woodward, either being critical of his appraisal of the impact of the Decrees or using contextual knowledge to support this view. Some students were unable to put forward a good response if they had little or flimsy knowledge of the Tridentine reforms, or again fell back on description.

Extract C put forward the argument that the main focus and enthusiasm for reforming the Church in Spain was to remove heresy, with references to Moorish, Jewish and Protestant threats. Most students were able to engage with this and showed good contextual understanding of contemporary Spanish attitudes to heresy. As with extracts B and C, there was a tendency to describe the features of the extract rather than evaluate the arguments being put forward.

Question Two

There was a mixed range of responses to this question, which required the students to analyse the extent to which the economy of Spain had been significantly strengthened in the years 1492 to 1516. There was some excellent subject knowledge, and students who had answered this question well were able to give a range of examples and provide good analysis and judgement on the relative strengths of the Spanish economy by 1516. However, there was a lack of understanding of the meaning of economy, with many students writing extensively about taxation, and royal finances. Unless this could be linked in a meaningful way to the economy (eg royal finances improved but this was not used to improve infrastructure so did not strengthen the economy). Students who had written predominantly about royal finances were largely placed in level 2. For those students who did focus on the economy, there was a tendency to place too much emphasis on the impact of the New World, with many making references to developments that did not take place until the 1530s or 1540s.

Many students had included references to a wide range of events and developments in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, particularly in terms of social and religious policy. There was generally a desire to write about the nobles, and the expulsions of the Jews and Muslims. Whilst there was some attempt to link this to the question, and to the ways in which these aspects of policy might have strengthened or weakened the economy, there were also many responses that were descriptive and not sufficiently analytical, and therefore placed at level 2 or 3.

Question Three

Question three required students to analyse the extent of change and continuity in the government of Charles I of Spain, in the years 1522 to 1556. Whilst some students had been able to engage with the second order concept of change and continuity, and as such had been able to provide a range of evidence across the full date range, weaker answers fell back on descriptions of various features of government.

A small number of students had included evidence about other aspects of Charles' reign, such as religious policy or foreign affairs. Unless there was a meaningful attempt to link this to the question, this was not credited. Similarly, references to the government of the New World also needed to be linked specifically to the question and were not credited in their own right.

Question Four

Question four focused on how successfully Philip II dealt with the Ottoman threat in the Mediterranean. Fewer students answered this question, though overall the students who did select this question answered it well. Stronger students were able to present a range of evidence across the reign of Philip II, focussing on the Ottoman threat but also making links to other aspects of foreign policy that were directly impacted by these successes and/or failures. Weaker responses had a narrow range of evidence and were largely centred around the events and impact of the Battle of Lepanto. References to the other areas of foreign policy, such as the Dutch Revolt, as being more or less successful than dealing with the Ottoman threat were not credited.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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