



A-level **History**

7042/1F

Report on the Examination

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General

Student responses to this examination paper included excellent examples of answers to all four of the questions. It was clear, in general, that students had a reasonable contextual awareness of the period. This included an understanding of some of the key themes within and across the key topic areas. Most students were confident in handling concepts like economic, social, political, etc. As a result of this general awareness that was evident, very few students completely misunderstood questions or made attempts to answer that were completely irrelevant to the focus of the question. Most students were able, to a greater or lesser extent, to engage with the core concept of the question with some degree of organisation and to produce an answer with a structured approach.

There was a great variation in the degree to which students were able to support their analysis and judgements. Stronger answers showed the ability to use knowledge analytically to support an argument, whereas less convincing answers used knowledge to descriptively or relied on assertions or generalisations. However, most answers did show at least a reasonable range of knowledge which was appropriate to the demands of a breadth study.

One approach that was common to many successful answers was to present a line of argument in the introduction to the answer. This was then analytically considered in a balanced way throughout the answer. This approach often led to a concluding judgement that was well supported by the preceding analysis.

Question 1

The majority of students responded well to this question. On the whole, students engaged well with the three extracts and were at least able to demonstrate a reasonable, if not good, understanding of the arguments being made. Most students understood the main arguments, and many were able to explore some of the subsidiary arguments.

One key area where students performed less well was in not focusing on the question concept. The question was about the significance of the impact 1832 Great Reform Act. Whilst many students retained this concept at the centre of the answer, some focused more on agreeing and disagreeing with the content of the extract without relating this to the significance of the impact of the Reform Act. Students need to remember that the key concept of the question needs to be at the centre of the analysis and evaluation.

In Extract A, most students identified the key argument that the Great Reform Act strengthened the landed classes in the short term. They also identified that in the longer term it led to an increased sharing of power with the middle and working classes. Most students were able to effectively assess this argument about change.

In Extract B, most students understand the argument that the Great Reform Act did not quickly change the political landscape. They had a good understanding of the continuity after 1832 which was used effectively to evaluate the validity of the argument. Some students, though relatively few, also explored the subsidiary argument that the changes that happened did not begin in 1832 but predated this legislation.

In Extract C, students understood the argument about the impact of the Great Reform Act on radical movements. Students tended to have a good awareness of the radical political movements following 1832. However, of the three extracts, this is the one where students were least likely to relate their evaluation back to the question concept – the significance of the impact of the 1832 Great Reform Act.

In terms of contextual knowledge, students showed a good understanding of the overall period of time. Although there were answers with generalisation and assertion, many students were able to select appropriate examples of knowledge to support or challenge the arguments being made.

More successful answers focused on the main arguments within the extracts. Some answers instead adopted a line-by-line analysis. Whilst this could be successful, it did tend to lead students toward assessing whether individual details were accurate or not, rather than evaluating the wider arguments.

Question 2

This question was particularly popular with students, and it is clear that students had a reasonable contextual knowledge of this topic area. Most students were capable of distinguishing ‘political’ from other historical themes. However, a small number of students did not focus on the concept of political and simply talked about pressure for change in general, including economic pressures and military pressures.

The main approach to this question was to contrast examples of significant political pressure with examples of political pressure that were less successful. Many students produced good answers through this approach. Within this, some worked thematically, for example pressure for parliamentary reform, political pressure from Irish nationalists, etc. A second approach was to contrast the significance of pressure for political change with the significance of pressure for other change, like economic reform. When done effectively, this approach was also successful and was a valid response to the question.

In general, students handled the key concept of ‘significant pressure’ well. It was usually addressed in terms of whether it led to change. Most students were able to focus on analytically considering whether pressure for political change was significant or not.

Small but significant numbers of students have once again made reference to an 1819 Toleration Act – this is not the first exam session where it has been referred to. This seems to be a conflation of the 1812 reform to older Toleration Acts which benefited Methodists, and an act passed in 1819 in the United States. The number of references to this may indicate its inclusion in a published or online resource, and it is worth noting the need to take care with revision materials.

Question 3

This question focuses on the extent to which different social groups benefited from the economic developments in the period 1783 to 1812. Students in general had a good grasp of the economic developments of the period and how they affected key social groups. This meant that many students were able to produce organised answers which responded to the focus of the question.

However, it is of note that, in general, students were less confident discussing landowners than other groups. Considering that landowners are a named social group within the specification, it is important that students have a confident understanding of their role and experience during this period. Many

students were able to mention enclosure and improved profits from farming. Few showed awareness of the wider benefits for landowners such as the profits from selling or renting land for industry or selling resource rights on their land.

However, when it came to discussing other groups, like the middle-classes or industrialists, students were usually able to utilise an appropriate range of knowledge for a breadth topic.

Question 4

As always, it was impressive to see the range of knowledge that students brought into the exam about economic growth in the nineteenth century. Many students had key statistics that they used to exemplify growth, particularly around the growth of railways and increased metal production. Many students used their knowledge to build an analytical answer.

However, there was a big variation between students who engaged with the question concept and those who simply focused on economic growth. The question was about improvements in the lives of British people, with economic growth as one factor. Many students grasped this, and they linked the economic growth to the lives of the British people. However, weaker answers either overlooked the link to ‘improvement in the lives of British people’ or made simple assertions of improvement that were not developed.

Most students produced a range of other factors, supported by convincing knowledge. Common selections included parliamentary reform, social reform, workplace legislation and education reform. Regardless of the selection, more successful answers were able to link the developments to improvements in the lives of British people. For example, if referring to the extension of the franchise, less convincing answers were more likely to make a generalised assertion that having the vote meant a better life. More successful answers might explain, for example, the significance of having the vote in terms of pressure for social legislation.

Most students reached a judgement which selected one factor. Some students developed a judgement that combined factors, for example in arguing that economic developments allowed for other improvements, or similar.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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