



A-level **History**

7042/1G

Report on the Examination

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General

Most students completed all three questions, indicating that time management was not an issue. Students generally understood the essay requirements, with some responses being particularly strong. The best answers maintained a consistent viewpoint while considering alternative arguments. Such responses were also driven by analysis and conceptual understanding. However, lower-scoring students often struggled to support their assertions with evidence, and their material was not always well-linked to the focus of the question. Students who revise thoroughly tend to perform better. Some students also provided opposing views or alternative factors without sufficient analysis or judgement. They seemingly gave equal weight to all of the factors or arguments and by doing so, produced some quite pedestrian, mechanistic responses.

Despite the age of the specification, there remains some confusion about the requirements for question 01. Weaker responses still often mix skills from component 2 with component 1, such as considering the provenance or tone of the extracts, which is unnecessary and time-consuming. Students should focus upon evaluating the holistic arguments in each of the extracts against their own, relevant knowledge, rather than analysing in a line-by-line fashion. Generally, there will be more than one argument contained within each extract, consequently an effective approach might be to interrogate each of these arguments in turn against their knowledge rather than describing all of the arguments and then describing evidence. The strongest responses effectively identified and evaluated arguments within each extract, explicitly linking their commentary to the question. They were able to evaluate in a convincing way.

Section A

Question 1

Most students were able to engage with the extracts, with responses generally stronger for A and B than for C. In A, most students grasped the claim that there was economic consensus during the period, although some focused on political consensus. Higher-scoring answers gave evidence of similar economic policies, including references to nationalisation, Keynesian economics, and full employment. Stronger responses also addressed the full scope of the question. Some responses were only able to draw upon evidence from the Attlee to Churchill governments. Some students contested the extract with evidence that the consensus was not always adhered to, citing denationalisation after 1951. Many also included the argument that the consensus was largely successful, supported by some data.

In extract B, some students only addressed part of the main contention, that Labour's economic policies were clear-sighted and effective. Those who also understood the contrast between Labour and the Conservatives demonstrated a deeper understanding of the arguments. The better-performing students used a range of evidence to support the argument, including Labour's more careful use of austerity measures to suppress domestic demand and inflation, and their export drive. This was compared to the risky Conservative tax giveaways before the elections of 1955 and 1959, fiscal policies that stimulated consumerism, and the damaging stop-go cycle that ensued. Some students seemed to struggle to articulate what stop-go was, how the government had created it and why it was so damaging.

In extract C, references to defence were often discussed from a political rather than an economic perspective leading some responses to spiral off into such topics as failed applications to join the EEC or decolonisation. Some students overlooked the argument that government economic policy neglected

the need for modernising transport and industry, instead focusing upon the number of houses built or other domestic policies.

The key determinants of success were how well students identified arguments, linked them to the question, and evaluated them against a broad knowledge base. Some students were more confident discussing the Attlee period than the postwar period of 1951-64. Many appeared uncertain about Keynesianism, austerity and stop-go – all crucial concepts in postwar economic questions. Time should be given to unpacking these concepts for students to fully grasp government policy and their relative success in managing the economy.

Section B

Question 2

Most students understood the demands of the question. Many engaged with the quality of life of the working class (Q2) to some degree, with some providing very good answers. Most responses identified improvements and balanced these with ongoing problems or limitations, though often with less confidence on the persistence of poverty and sweated trades. The better responses considered the interplay between different developments and analysed their impact on the quality of life, such as how the development of railways facilitated worker movement, leisure opportunities, and the spread of cheap food. Some students discussed legislation and its relative impact on quality of life and the development of the economy leading to increasing real wages with confidence. The strongest responses maintained a consistent viewpoint from the outset, identifying improvements and ongoing issues in quality of life, while analysing obstacles to change, including the permissive nature of legislation due to the prevailing zeitgeist - or reasons for gradual change, such as shifting perspectives of the working classes. Those that led with the analysis were most likely to be awarded at the higher end of the mark scheme.

Question 3

Many students understood that they could consider the role of the unions against alternative factors. There were examples of excellent responses that did this effectively; leading with a view and making comparisons between factors to evaluate relative significance with justification. However, some answers were quite brief in their analysis of the unions' role, focusing mainly on funding. Few responses appreciated the significant role played by socialists, such as the Fabians or the SDF, in the emergence of the Labour Party. Many referenced the role of the Liberals, but not always convincingly. Knowledge in some responses seemed less secure, and the range of factors was thus not well supported.

Question 4

This was a popular question and had some of the strongest responses in section B. There were some impressive displays of knowledge. The strongest responses assessed the extent to which British governments damaged the stability of Ireland, including references to events in the 1930s. Many found reasons to defend some of the actions of the British government, while a few also considered the roles played by nationalists and unionists. However, some responses struggled with the breadth of the question and became overly narrative, losing sight of the key debate. Students should be reminded to use the explicit terms in the question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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