



A-level **History**

7042/2F

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

The responses to the questions on this year's paper illustrated the full ability range of students sitting the examination. All levels of the mark scheme were used for both Section A and B, with some students progressing to the very top of Level 5. These responses were highly sophisticated and very impressive. Whilst there were some answers which were awarded Level 1, these were quite rare and there were very few students who had little to write on the questions.

Both Sections A and B were marked according to the respective generic levels mark schemes. The indicative content was also referred to, but any answer worthy of credit was awarded the appropriate mark, regardless of whether the information provided by the student was detailed in the indicative content as this is indicative, not prescriptive. Adjustments to the marks within these levels were made according to how well the student's work matched the level requirements. The mid-point of the level was always used as a starting point, with students reaching the top of the level demonstrating some evidence of the level above even if most of the response was firmly in the level below. Equally, students fell towards the bottom of the level if the answer did not consistently meet all the criteria of that level throughout the response.

Overall, there was little difference seen in the quality of the responses to the different areas of the specification content, and, to this extent, the questions proved effective at differentiating between students.

Question 01

The source question was appropriately challenging and clearly differentiated between students when it came to their ability to assess value in relation to the question. Some students did this very well and were able to clearly explain why points were either valuable or limited in value in relation to the specific question set. These responses used contextual knowledge and were able to explore both value and limitations before reaching a judgement on each source in turn, which was very impressive. Other students were implicit rather than explicit in their assessment of value.

Some students were quite mechanical and would claim that a point was valuable without really explaining why – asserting rather than demonstrating value. Others would dismiss points as 'biased' whilst others argued whether the sources were or were not convincing rather than valuable. Nevertheless, most students were able to assess all three of the sources and provide at least some limited comment on each.

When assessing Source A, lots of students commented on the fact that the source came from Louis XIV himself and suggested that this would be valuable as he is best placed to comment on the beginning of his personal reign. Some students acknowledged that the intended audience was his son and the public nature of this document meant that it might not be a fully accurate picture of Louis XIV's policies at the start of his reign. Lots of students were able to put the source in context and were able to explain that the policies outlined were in keeping with their knowledge of the period. For example, commenting on Louis' statement that a 'king needs to see and hear his subjects' and linking this to the policy of Indendants. The source seemed very accessible, and the key differentiator was whether or not students really engaged with task by explaining why their points suggested the source was or was not valuable in relation to the issue stated in the question.

Source B also seemed accessible to most students and lots of answers focused on the fact that this is a private diary entry and explained that this increased the value when studying the beginning of Louis XIV's reign due to the lack of a public audience. Some of students commented on the fact that the author was a foreign visitor at Louis XIV's court and explained that this was valuable as it provided historians with an international perspective on the beginning of the reign from someone who was there at the time. There was reference to the fact that the value of this source may be limited as the Dutchman would have been subject to Louis XIV's propaganda and, therefore, would not be able to provide an accurate picture of the beginning of the reign. However, better answers engaged with this further and suggested that the content of the source was valuable in demonstrating Louis' propaganda machine at the start of the reign due to the positive language directed at the Sun King. Most students were able to successfully analyse the content of the source using their contextual knowledge.

Source C also seemed accessible to students, even though some students became confused regarding the author. Some students misread the provenance and thought it was from marquis de Sourdis rather than being a letter sent to him by a doctor in the provinces. Lots of students were able to see value when analysing the author as he is well placed to comment on the beginning of Louis' reign from the perspective of someone outside the court. Some argued that the purpose of the source may have been to convince the marquis to act so there could have been some exaggeration in regard to the extent of suffering in Blois at the beginning of the personal reign. However, some students took this further and explained that the need to write such an emotive letter demonstrated the true desperation experienced by Louis' subjects. Most students were able to successfully analyse the content of the source using their contextual knowledge.

When considering all three sources, stronger answers reached an overall judgement on the value of each source individually. Some students attempted to convey an overall judgement at the end of the answer, but this tended to be more of a comparison with the judgement centring around which source was the most valuable, which is not what the A Level source question requires.

Question 02

Most students seemed to be able to access this question. There was lots of knowledge regarding Colbert which, in most cases, was deployed well. Students were able to explain the importance of trade and commerce and were able to give specific examples to support their points. Some students were able to consider policies such as improving transportation and communications in France and link this to improving trade and commerce (for example, improvements to the canal network and its impact on internal trade). However, other students failed to see the link between these policies and trade and commerce which was disappointing. Most students were able to successfully balance their answer by suggesting that trade/commerce reforms were not significant in the long term despite initial success. Students referred to the outbreak of the Dutch War and how shifting priorities meant that trading ventures were not maintained. Students were also able to compare and contrast with other policies such as taxation reforms.

Question 03

This seemed a popular question amongst students, but the key differentiator was whether or not a student was able to explain religious policies beyond that of the Huguenots. Almost all students were able to reference the Huguenots and suggest how policies post 1685 helped strengthen/weaken Louis's

authority in France. However, some students failed to reference other religious policies suggesting that they had not fully understood the question. Those that answered the question well were able to comment on other religious groups such as the Jansenists or comment on Louis' relationship with Rome.

Question 04

This question seemed accessible to most students, and it was clear that lots of students that attempted the question had good knowledge on the Treaty of Utrecht. Lots of students were able to give specific examples of territory gained and lost and link this back to the question. Some students were able to take this further and explain that Louis XIV kept the territory that was most important to him (eg Strasbourg) and use this to suggest that any concessions, therefore, did not damage France. Others did end up contradicting themselves if they merely listed the territory gained/lost.

Some students commented on the war itself, which was credited if there was a link to the treaty. For example, going into detail regarding the cost of war and explaining that the gains made did not justify the economic turmoil suggesting disaster for France. However, students who focused on the war without making link to the treaty were not rewarded for these points.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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