



A-level **History**

7042/2J

Report on the Examination

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Section A**Question 01****Source A**

Students had a very good understanding of the provenance and content of Source A in relation to Lincoln's leadership. There was a very good understanding overall of the provenance, with especially good analysis of the date in relation to the context, the author being a prominent Radical Republican criticising the leader of the Republican Party, and the intended purpose linked to the Emancipation Proclamation being issued a month later. Contextual knowledge was used very well to support analysis of this source. There were some weaker responses where the contextual knowledge chosen was very generic or not specific to the focus of the question, with some going back to before Lincoln was even President. There was a good balance of value and limitations, especially on the provenance. Content and arguments were, overall chosen well and supported with some good contextual knowledge. However, the limited range of arguments assessed prohibited many responses from reaching the higher boundaries.

Source B

Source B was responded to well by the students, as many recognised Clement Vallandigham as the key opponent from the Democrats towards Lincoln. There was, in many responses, excellent commentary on both provenance and content linked with the course of the American Civil War. Specific knowledge was used well to support Vallandigham's argument about Lincoln's leadership, such as his suspension of habeas corpus in Maryland, and his hesitancy to change military leaders in the Eastern Theatre. There was a good balance of value and limitations, similar to A, especially on provenance. Tone was understood and applied well when addressed.

Source C

Source C demonstrated a good understanding overall by the students. Understanding of provenance was more mixed on this source than the other sources. Whilst there was a good understanding of the value of Grant as the author, the commentary on the dates was either generic or based on stock evaluation. The content was addressed to a good extent, however this is where many student responses started to be limited in comparison to the responses to the other sources. There was some good knowledge used in places to support provenance and content, however some parts lacked direct focus on the question, or in reference to the value/limitations of the source.

Section B**Question 02**

This question saw a strong response overall, demonstrating the students understanding of the rise and impact of abolitionism in the Northern states between 1850-1854. Those students who had a very good understanding of the demands of the question focused on the dates well. Case studies such as the reactions to the Fugitive Slave Act (1850), the publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852) and the Burns Affair (1854), were well explained with excellent, specifically selected knowledge to support their

argument. What made them even stronger was the analysis of their impact on both the Southern states, and on national politics in the time period specified.

Strong counter arguments linked to the question included the lack of unity in the abolitionist movement in this time period, as well as counter arguments such as the rise of the Republican Party following the controversial Kansas-Nebraska Act. Weaker answers had either a limited approach to the abolitionist movement in the time period specified or had misread the question. There, sadly, were many responses outside the time period, looking at 1820s and 1830s material, which weakened the answer.

Question 03

This question saw the greatest range of responses. The question was focusing on why the Republican Party won the presidential election of 1860. Whilst many students approached this question very well and applied very specific material to the focus of the question, some students also saw this as a question to list or describe all the reasons why the Republican Party became popular in the 1850s, and not necessarily why they won the election in 1860. There was good commentary on the weaknesses of the Democratic Party in the immediate run-up to the election, such as the split at the Charleston/Baltimore conventions and how this ultimately paved the way for the electoral college vote to go Republican, as well as mistakes by leading Democrats like Buchanan and Douglas.

There was also good, relevant commentary on the Republican platform mirroring the problems faced by many Americans at this time, as well as the position and reputation of Abraham Lincoln. However, many responses went too far back to the 1854 Kansas Nebraska Act, or even the Compromise of 1850, which weakened the response. As much as they were strong reasons for the rise (and emergence) of the Republican party, these events happened prior to an earlier Presidential election in 1856, in which it lost. Weaker responses either described features without analysing with reference to why the Republicans won: wrote very little about Democratic weaknesses or didn't focus on the election at all.

Question 04

This question, overall, saw a very positive response from the students. Students clearly had a strong wealth of knowledge linked to the lives of African-Americans throughout the period of Reconstruction. There was a very strong application, in many responses, of case studies linked to the improvement or decline of African-American lives, such as the Colfax Massacre, the Slaughterhouse Cases, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, and legal disputes such as the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Students were confident in these areas, and applied these well in their responses. Stronger answers went all the way up to 1877, assessing how the Compromise of 1877 affected the African-American community following Republican retreat from Reconstruction.

Less effective answers tended to be very descriptive, with little analysis of how far lives improved or not: merely listing ideas of improvement or not improving. Some answers did stray outside the time period, both earlier with the Thirteenth Amendment or the Emancipation Proclamation, or later with the Jim Crow Laws or the emergence of black leaders such as Booker T Washington, which were irrelevant.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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