



A-level **History**

7042/2Q

Report on the Examination

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General

The exam differentiated well with a good range of marks across each question. The most challenging aspect of the component remains Question 1; students are able to deploy contextual knowledge but lack the ability to assess value well, especially limitations. Some students remain overly dismissive, especially when it comes to author of source. There needs to be a greater focus on the value of each source in relation to the question topic. The essay questions were largely well answered, and students have clearly been well versed in what a good essay structure looks like. There were many examples of precise and accurate evidence used to support convincing arguments in relation to the question. There were, however, still some examples of overly narrative accounts loosely linked to the question focus.

Question 01

This question focused on the problems faced by African-Americans in the years 1954 to 1960 and covers the fourth bullet point of specification under the Eisenhower years. It could also briefly touch on the third bullet point under the John F Kennedy section. This is clearly a well taught topic area as many responses showed some specific and well-focused knowledge. Generally, the structure of responses was quite similar from centre to centre; content, context and provenance were assessed, although not always linked to value. The vast majority of responses addressed each source in turn and provided a judgement on value at some point during the answer. However, there were some responses that compared the value of all three sources together and this is not required for this question. Stronger responses moved away from merely stating ‘the source is valuable because...’ and developed a more holistic approach, taking into account limitations as part of their evaluation. Very good responses were also able to show that limitations identified could also be considered valuable.

On the whole, students attempted to engage with all three sources in a balanced way. Responses to Source A were especially strong. Many recognised the value of the source in terms of the authorship and timing of the source. Some responses misunderstood the source and believed the Manifesto to be in support of improving civil rights for African-Americans. Sources B and C showed good contextual knowledge however comments on provenance were less well developed and tended to be quite general at times. Some students were overly dismissive. For example, in Source B, some responses stated that as the source was only from one woman, it was therefore limited because it didn’t take into account the role men played in the Movement. Other responses showed a complete misunderstanding of the value of John Howard Griffin in Source C.

Centres should continue to develop a deeper engagement with provenance and value to avoid generalisations and simplistic responses.

Question 02

This was by far the most popular question, answered by most of the students who sat the paper. The question allowed students to assess foreign policy in both Europe and Asia and could include information from bullet point two in the specification under the Truman section. This question was able to differentiate well between students who knew the history of Truman’s efforts in Europe and/or Asia to those who were able to provide convincing, well-substantiated, and balanced arguments regarding Truman’s success in containing Communism. This included analysing issues such as the Berlin Airlift, aid to Greece and Turkey, the rebuilding of Japan, the Korean War, and the ‘loss’ of China.

Weaker responses tended to focus only on Europe or Asia or have a narrower focus on both. For example, some responses only looked at Berlin, Korea, and China and gave overly narrative accounts of what happened during each event. This question also highlighted some confusion by students about whether or not the Korean War was a successful example of Containment. There was a lack of understanding, at times, that Korea had been divided in 1945 and that this was not a result of the Northern invasion in June 1950.

Question 03

This question was as popular as Question 04. This question covered the bullet point bullet point one under the Johnson section in the specification. It was clear that students had a good understanding of the what the Great Society was and what it tried to achieve. Strong answers demonstrated the ability to compare the successes and failures of the Great Society, within different sections of society, in achieving the American Dream.

Some responses tended to only focus on civil rights legislation and that limited the range of the response. A number of responses struggled to mention anything other than the impact of the Vietnam War on the failures of the Great Society. The best answers developed a clear line of argument straight away which showed range and balance and they were also able to show identify to which the 'American Dream did or did not apply .

Question 04

This question produced a wide range of responses, and it was clear that students had been well taught about the Watergate affair. This was not always well linked to the question focus, and, at times, the responses became overly narrative. The question was not only about Watergate but focused on bullet points two to four of the Nixon section of the specification.

Much like Question 02, some responses demonstrated a good understanding of foreign and/or domestic issues. Very good responses were able to deal with both parts of the question well and provide well substantiated judgements. Knowledge of foreign affairs tended to be much more detailed than knowledge of domestic policies and issues. This meant that some judgement, in this question, lacked precision

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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