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AS

# History

7041/1K

Report on the Examination

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## General comments

It was clear that the majority of students had been well-prepared for the AS examination, now in its second year, and students responded well to the demands of the paper, especially in Q01 where comparison of the extracts was much more evident. Students were able to write at greater length for both the extract question and also for the essay response. Both types of question enabled students to present rounded responses.

The overall quality of responses was pleasing, with many students demonstrating good understanding of the period. The essay question on Reconstruction (Q02) was more popular than the one on the development of the US economy (Q03). Whilst the majority of students displayed an impressive grasp of content, often over and above that expected in a breadth study, fewer were able to select appropriate and relevant evidence in support of an analysis that was closely focused on the questions posed. As a breadth paper, the more successful students demonstrated an appreciation of chronology and of change and continuity over time.

## Section A

### 01

The best responses were able to identify the overall argument presented in each extract, with the weaker responses adopting a line-by-line approach. The weakest responses usually only addressed one or two statements in each extract – or, in some cases, failed to understand an interpretation. There were also cases of unnecessary analysis of provenance by some students. Students should note that the question uses ‘extracts’ as the focus of analysis here and not ‘sources’, as some students would refer to them as.

Whilst better responses considered the interpretation of each extract as a whole and focused on the question posed, some students became side-tracked into explaining everything mentioned in the passages, regardless of their relevance to the overall interpretations. For example, Rockefeller’s business methods were detailed and analysed, leading to lengthy explanations of economic growth which had little relevance to the focus of the question. Good answers moved from an overall summary to a breakdown of the interpretation given in each extract, in relation to its key themes. For example, there was an evaluation, in Extract B, that reforms were passed due to public outcry and not, as in Extract A, due solely to the work of Roosevelt. Following this approach, comparison was sound and meaningful. Too many less able students tried to criticise the extracts for what they omitted rather than for the interpretations they offered and this approach made it difficult to draw any meaningful contrast between the two.

Some responses also did not grasp the time period in question and either provided too much detail pre 1890 or went too far into the 1920s, not fully understanding the period of progressivism.

## Section B

### 02

This was the more popular essay question. Stronger responses provided a balanced assessment and argued where Reconstruction succeeded and where it failed. The best responses were able to note the differences between Southern state legislature and those of the Northern states. Few students engaged with the term Reconstruction and that limited the quality of responses. Whilst a number of students produced well-balanced responses, showing an appreciation of progress and

acknowledging changes over time, less able students tended to list the 'failures' of Reconstruction, giving an assertive link to the question at the end of each paragraph.

### **03**

There were some excellent answers to this question from students who had a strong appreciation of economic development from 1890-1914. These responses were able to balance Open Immigration with other factors and provide clear and evidenced links between the two. Other able students were able to address the full time period, usually by showing how the start of WW1 in Europe affected immigration or how the war itself was a separate reason for economic growth. Many students were able to make a clear judgement and sustain an analysis with appropriate supporting evidence.

Some students under-performed by offering only one-sided essays, supporting the premise of the quotation without qualification or by ignoring the stem of the question -Open Immigration- as a factor. Students need to be reminded that all essay answers require argument and a balanced appraisal and that one-sided answers will not reach the higher mark ranges. Lower marks also went to the students who could only mention one or two reasons for economic development or ignored the question words and dates, going on to write about economic developments pre 1890.

### **Use of statistics**

Statistics used in this report may be taken from incomplete processing data. However, this data still gives a true account on how students have performed for each question.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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