
AS

History

7041/2Q

Report on the Examination

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General comments

The second year of this AS examinations of the new A-level specification saw many students showing the same flaws as in the first year. Most were very well prepared in terms of both factual knowledge and their ability to deliver on paper in a coherent fashion. However, problems did emerge with the questions notably in terms of many students failing to appreciate the requirement for provenance and tone in the Sources question and a failure to carefully read and appreciate the essay questions.

Section A

01

Students were required to evaluate two separate sources in relation to an issue – relations between the US and Cuba in the years 1960 to 1961. They were not asked to compare the given extracts, and those that did this wasted valuable time, although they were not penalised for so doing. The answer did not require an introduction – nor an overall conclusion, but some concluding judgement on each extract in relation to the question posed was helpful to meet the criteria for the highest marks.

This was the second year of this question type so it would have been reasonable to hope that the comments made last year in relation to a failure to comment sufficiently on provenance and tone would have been heeded by all centres. However, too frequently the comment on tone was non-existent and that on provenance was merely an echo of the provenance given.

In the case of these two sources there was ample opportunity to discuss the significance of a speech at the UN, in New York in the diplomatic centre of International Affairs at the heart of American capitalism. Some students were confused by the content and chronology with a lack of appreciation of the fact that the US had been removed from Cuba at this stage and Castro was criticising what he found on taking power. There was also a willingness to tag Castro as a communist from the moment he took power. In the second source many students failed to realise that Kennedy was trying to obscure US involvement in the Bay of Pigs incident and were far too willing to give Kennedy extensive credit for honesty based, possibly on his reputation in popular culture. Judgements on usefulness were often simplistic and failed to see the resentment created by the legacy of US influence in Cuba and how Castro's expression of this would have influenced his subsequent dealings. A deeper understanding of provenance here could easily have improved the majority of answers.

Section B

02

The principle problems that emerged here were students who failed to appreciate that the focus of the answer should be on the domestic economy. Around 5-10% elected to answer this as a foreign policy question and though points about the Marshall plans usefulness for sustaining trading partners were credited this was insufficient for a strong mark. Those who did see this as an economic question struggled to appreciate the scope offered. Many students saw Truman as synonymous with the Federal government rather than attempting to consider the role of Congress. In addition many students were cheerfully willing to attribute the growth of the economy entirely to actions taken by the federal government rather than considering other economic factors such as the destruction of rival economies and the swift response of US manufacturing to the baby boom. Inevitably those that did see the full scope of the question did very well.

03

This question was highly attractive to candidates because of its seeming simplicity. However, the wealth of potential examples that students could draw on meant that selection skills were at a premium and also meant that students ran the risk of producing a list of events with minimal balance.

Successful students were able to point to the lack of major conflicts during the period and evaluate Eisenhower's relations with communist countries holistically in the context of the significant change following the end of WW2. The creation of CENTO and SEATO was often missed and those that did mention the two new organisations were unable to effectively comment on them. Hungary featured extensively and was usually used as the basis for a critique of Eisenhower's strength. Cuba was occasionally brought in but again there was a lack of appreciation for the fact that Castro was not communist from the beginning of the revolution. Successful answers recognised the fact that large scale military intervention was not required to show strength and that Eisenhower was trying to navigate towards a new paradigm of relations. These answers were more likely to consider Eisenhower's willingness to consider the use of nuclear weapons, his increase in the nuclear arsenal and his willingness to sanction (or at least turn a blind eye to) covert CIA operations such as those in Iran and Guatemala.

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.