
AS

History

7041/2K

Report on the Examination

June 2017

Version: 1.0

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Section A

Question 1

There were three elements to this question: an evaluation of provenance and tone, an evaluation of content and argument (both requiring some application of own knowledge) and a comparison. Although these three elements did not need to be addressed in equal measure, and it was sufficient for the comparison to emerge in the conclusion (although many good responses did maintain a comparative element throughout the answer), something of each was expected (although not always found) in answers.

Evaluation of provenance and tone was reasonably effective, with most students being able to state something of worth. Less able students often took the provenance of the two sources at face value, asserting that both Sources A and B held value due to them being official documents. More able students delved deeper and made reference to how both sources were written by British diplomats and how this perhaps limited the value of the sources due to them only providing a British interpretation of events. More able students also tended to make reference to the date of each source, commenting that at this juncture the British were in the process of breaking out of Splendid Isolationism, that the French were looking to further encircle Germany in light of the Entente of 1904, and that the Russians were more susceptible to forming an alliance due to being defeated by the Japanese in 1905. Comments on tone tended to be descriptive and unrelated to source value. For example, many students alluded to the informative tone of Source A and the cautious but hopeful tone of Source B without making reference to how the tone of each source impacted on its value.

Students managed the content of the two sources more effectively. Most were able to identify the overarching arguments in each source and most attempted to engage with and evaluate the material, although some did this more successfully than others. Whilst some evaluation was assertive, most students attempted to evaluate the content of the sources using contextual knowledge. More able students understood that Source A was a depiction of the French desire for improved relations between Russia and Britain. Stronger responses pointed out that Source B demonstrated that whilst Anglo-Russian relations were traditionally complicated, mainly due to the imperial rivalry that existed between the two powers in the Middle and Far East, the future seemed less bleak with both powers beginning to reconsider this rivalry, particularly after the surprise defeat for Russia against Japan and amidst growing tension in Europe. Students who used precise knowledge to support comments made on the source as a whole, achieved better than those students who used patchy knowledge to address content through a sentence-by-sentence approach.

In terms of the comparison, more able students did as asked and commented on the 'value' of the sources as evidence and evaluated how each would contribute to an understanding of Anglo-Russian relations in the years 1904 to 1907. Better answers made comparative judgement throughout, although there were some very good responses that dealt with the comparison effectively in the conclusion. More able students tended to argue that although Source A explored the wider context and the influence of France in improving relations between Britain and Russia, Source B was the more valuable source in that it attempted to offer quite a frank view on the complicated relationship between the two countries and what would be needed to achieve a formal Anglo-Russian agreement.

Section B**Question 2**

Most students answered this question effectively. Most students who attempted this question had a good to excellent grasp of the subject knowledge necessary to achieve well on a question asking about the reasons for Germany's worsening relations with foreign powers by 1900. There were some descriptive responses, which received less reward than those that adopted a more analytical stance. However, these descriptive responses often comprised impressive knowledge with occasional references to the question and so still managed to reach level 3 on the mark scheme. Most students offered balance but with differing levels of sophistication, with less able students spending far too much time discussing the named factor in the question (Wilhelm II), resulting in uneven balance. More able students adopted a much more even approach in terms of balance and evaluated a range of issues such as Wilhelm II's foreign policy, von Bulow's and Tirpitz's influence, economic rivalry with Britain, the legacy of the Bismarckian System, and French Revanchism. More able students tended to argue that although the Kaiser had distinct power and was sure to make the most of these powers to direct policy in a way that pleased him, there were wider issues that saw tensions rise across Europe by the turn of the century.

Question 3

This was the least popular of the two essay questions. Whilst there were some good responses, this question was done less effectively than question 2. Most students dealt with a range of factors reasonably well, but often failed to deal with the named factor (long standing disputes with Austria-Hungary) competently, preventing them from achieving beyond level 3 on the mark scheme. More able students provided a balanced assessment of the reasons for Italian entry into war, often judging that whilst long-standing rivalry with Austria-Hungary contributed to Italian involvement, other issues played a more pivotal role. In good responses, issues in relation to the named factor such as negotiations over Italian speaking territories, the Triple Alliance, and the Austrian invasion of Serbia in 1914 were balanced out by factors such as Italy's concern about remaining neutral, the Treaty of London, Risorgimento, and the 1902 agreement with France. The more precise the information and the tighter the links to the question, the more likely the answer was to reach the higher mark levels.

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.