
AS-LEVEL HISTORY

Component 7041/2C
Report on the Examination

Specification 7041
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Component 7041/2C

The Reformation in Europe, c1500–1564

Component 2C: The origins of the Reformation, c1500–1531

General Comments

That most students took the new AS format in their stride and used their time to the full to write substantial answers to both the compulsory source question (Q01) and their choice of essay question (Q02 or Q03) was pleasing. Of the optional questions, Q02 proved the more popular, but there was, nevertheless, a complete range of very good and weaker answers to both and there was little indication that students were pressed for time to complete their answers. The comments which follow are indicative of some of the strengths and weaknesses commonly seen in students' answers this examination season. Some are specific to this component and others generic across Question 1s.

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.

With regard to content, most students were able to understand the content of the two sources, being able to comment on the different opinions which they represented. The diversity of opinions was clear for some students in the attribution, with the words 'encouraging' and 'against' steering them. Students who addressed content through a sentence-by-sentence (or even phrase-by-phrase) approach produced far less satisfactory answers than those who summarised and commented on the overall arguments. However, many were able to comment on the differing views and found the sources accessible.

Evaluation of provenance and tone was dealt with well by many students. The sources had distinctive tones that were fairly easy for students to comment on, being so aggressive in nature, with vocabulary to help guide, such as 'go to it' and 'deceive'. Answers where the comments on provenance were developed and supported were more impressive, such as those who referred to Luther's initial stance on peasant reform compared to that in the pamphlet. Students need to be reminded that comments on provenance, as much as those on content, need support. Simple statements of 'unreliability' or 'bias' were insufficient.

In terms of the comparison, better students did as required and commented on the 'value' of the sources as evidence and evaluated how each would contribute to an understanding of the war. Many emphasised that both sources would be valuable in explaining the debate from two contrasting angles, and, if well-reasoned, such a judgement was equally acceptable. However, students who merely asserted the superiority of one source over another, talked of the 'validity' –

usually meaning accuracy of content – of the sources, or, in a few cases, simply ignored the requirement to address comparison, showed little understanding of what this question asked for.

Section B

Question 02

Most students were well aware of the weaknesses of the Church by 1517 but not as many were able to say how humanism had contributed to them. Weaker students described humanism and the Church's weaknesses, without linking them, though better students were able to evaluate the effect humanism had on the Church, as well as other contributory factors. As always, 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.

Question 03

This was an extremely popular question. Most students who attempted this question had a fair to very good knowledge of the support of Frederick the Wise, the contribution the other German princes made and other factors. The majority were able to address Frederick the Wise's contribution, even if it were only in a descriptive way, and Luther's own influence, if nothing else. Very few went beyond the dates specified in the question and better students made a supported judgement.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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