
AS-LEVEL HISTORY

Component 7041/2P
Report on the Examination

Specification 7041
June 2016

Version: 1.0

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Component 7041/2P

The Transformation of China, 1936–1997

Component 2P: The emergence of the People's Republic of China, 1936–1962

General Comments

It was good to find 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). Of the latter, Q02 proved considerably more popular, but there was, nevertheless, a range of 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 in this session. Question 01 has been addressed in some detail so as to provide teachers with further guidance as to what helped produce a good answer in this new style of question.

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 regards to provenance and tone, most students were able to make good comments on the value of Source A in providing an insight into the issues between the CCP and GMD regarding co-operation. The fact that this source is a diary was explored well by most students, and the content and tone was used by many to indicate that Jiang was trying to put himself in a favourable light thus impacting on its value. Some students did not get the full significance of the provenance of Source B regarding it being a public statement. However others again used the tone and content to support their arguments that this was a propaganda statement directed against the GMD, thus again providing evidence as to the difficulty of co-operation. 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.

As far as the second element is concerned, the majority of students had little difficulty in understanding the content of the two sources and commenting on the views being expressed by both sides. Most were able to support and explain the content of Source A by reference to the circumstances surrounding the kidnapping, the war with Japan and previous actions by the GMD against the CCP. They were also able to evaluate Jiang's promises by reference to events that followed the kidnapping. Similarly, good answers were able to evaluate the content of Source B by, for example, using their knowledge to challenge Mao's claims that the CCP was at the point strong enough to act as a 'revolutionary tide'.

In terms of the comparison, better students did as asked and used their understanding of the provenance and the content of the sources to comment on the 'value' of the sources as evidence, and to evaluate how each would contribute to an understanding of the difficulties of co-operation. The strongest answers compared the sources throughout their answers, rather than leaving the comparison to the end. It was possible to argue for either source as being the most valuable; what was key was that judgements on value were substantiated.

Section B

Question 02

This was the more popular optional question and there were some outstanding answers which had both range and detail in explaining why the CCP was able to consolidate power by 1953. Such answers were able to explain the importance of the peasantry to the CCP and how they were tied to the regime via the Land Reforms. Against this, good students argued for other factors such as the use of mass campaigns, the stabilisation of the economy and social reform as a way of consolidating power. 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. Some students were able to reach Level 5 by providing a clear judgement (backed up by evidence) as to which factor/s they considered to be most important in allowing the CCP to consolidate their power.

The key word in this question was 'consolidating' with the important date being 1953. Weaker answers focused on events up to 1949 only, and wrote an answer explaining CCP success in the civil war. Such responses were unable to reach the higher levels they did not address the issue of consolidation.

Question 03

Although there were some excellent responses, most students who answered this question lacked sufficient knowledge to comment on Mao's position within the CCP or the actions of other members of the CCP following the Great Leap Forward. Indeed, many students attempted to answer the question by just describing the failures of the Great Leap Forward and the impact that it had on the peasantry. Conversely, the best answers were able to discuss the criticisms faced by Mao after the Great Leap Forward, along with the CCP's reversal of his economic policies, and to balance these against Mao's continued power as evidenced by, for example, his purge of Peng Dehuai and the CCP as a whole. Again, precise detail to support points, and clear links to the question throughout were needed to gain the higher mark levels.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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