
AS

History

7041/1E

Report on the Examination

June 2017

Version: 1.0

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General

In this second year of the new specification it was pleasing to see that students had taken on board some of the advice given last year and showed much better technique in answering the questions, particularly Question 1. Students' responses continue to show evidence of careful teaching, though as a general point students need to be reminded of the importance of selecting appropriate relevant and precise detail to support their arguments.

Question 1

Some students failed to wholly understand the interpretation in Extract A. Some were confused between the Baltic and the Balkans and did not understand the reference to the southern fleet. Some were able to point out the argument in the Extract that the southern fleet was important in ensuring Russian victory in the Great Northern War but limited numbers were able to support this. Students tended to argue that the interpretation was not convincing and gave details of the failure at Pruth to support this, but few were able to further develop any argument about the symbolic importance of Pruth despite its failure so in general the assessment of this extract tended to be unbalanced.

Students found it easier to identify the interpretation in Extract B. In most cases students were able to explain that the Extract viewed Peter's southern campaigns as ultimately achieving nothing despite the resource put in and that therefore they were unimportant. Students were usually able to provide some level of support for this with details from the Pruth campaigns, the failure to build substantive alliances in the region and the loss of territory gained at Azov. Balance tended to be provided with a recognition of the symbolic importance of early victory and the experience gained. Most students understood the need to come to a judgement about which interpretation was most convincing, however, the quality of this tended to be dependent on their ability to fully recognise and discuss the individual interpretations.

Although it was less prevalent than last year it is worth re-iterating again that this question focussed on interpretations. Comments about the reliability, use or accuracy of the Extracts are unlikely to be helpful. Students were much better at stating what they understood the overall interpretation to be before starting their discussion and often this did help them stay focussed. However, a significant minority still favoured a line by line approach which often led to them becoming confused. This was particularly an issue in Extract A where students often spent so long discussing the first 2 sentences of the Extract which really only set the scene that they had run out of steam by the time they came to the second half of the Extract which contained the real core of the interpretation or could not cope with the seeming dissonance between the 2 halves of the Extract.

Question 2

This question was reasonably popular and most students were able to demonstrate a decent understanding of Peter the Great's religious reform. Less able students tended to describe reforms without really developing aims which sometimes remained only implicit. Some students gave a great deal of detail about Patriarch Nikon and there was some tendency to conflate Old Believers with the Russian Orthodox Church in general which did limit some comments. Better answers were able to assess the aim of extending the power of the Tsar against other aims such as financial pressure and accessing Church resources, westernisation, and modernisation and come to a substantiated judgement about which aims were most important.

Question 3

This question was reasonably popular and most students were able to make some relevant comment about changes in society. Students sometimes took the approach of looking at all the changes and then all the continuities but it was easier for students to come to an overall assessment if they, for example looked at change/continuity within different groups i.e. nobles, serfs or by a different area of society, i.e. societal structure, education, etc. Students could look a whole range of different issues which could be relevant to this question such as, for example, the building of St Petersburg, clothes and beards, education, the Table of Ranks, serfdom. Less able students tended to just describe change, sometime with limited reference to society. There was also a tendency to either concentrate on just a very narrow range such as just education or to turn the question into a general one about all of Peter the Great's reforms including financial and governmental reform with very limited comment on the impact of society. Students are reminded of the need to ensure they select the most relevant evidence to support their arguments. Nevertheless there were some very good answers which were able to offer balanced discussion and come to substantiated judgements.

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.