
A-LEVEL HISTORY

Component 1D Stuart Britain and the Crisis of Monarchy, 1603-1702
Report on the Examination

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General

The scripts indicated that the majority of students were aware of the demands of the extract question and that many had been guided to approach the question in a structured way. The majority of students took each extract in turn and focused on the specific task rather than giving a general response on the period in question. There were still, however, some students who clearly struggled with the time conditions, particularly writing too much for the extract question by writing in general about the period. Stronger responses seemed to reflect a closer reading of the extracts and more focused written responses. Some students chose to write their essays first and then complete the extracts at the end. The majority of students chose to answer essay 2 and essay 4. The years 1640 to 1660 are obviously central to the century but students seem less sure of the narrative of the period with regard to the Interregnum. On all three essay questions there was evidence of students not covering the scope of the period in question. Students should use the dates in the question and check that they have referenced something from the start and end date, even if briefly, as check on their range of coverage. Credit was given to those who went outside the period, briefly, to put aspects of the question in to a broader context. Given that this is a breadth paper, such selective deployment of broader contextual knowledge was encouraging. For example, on question 2 some referenced further deterioration in Charles' relationship with the Political Nation in the 1630s and on question 4 some referenced the post 1688 monarchy for the failings of the Restoration Settlement and the concept of the 'crisis of state'.

Question 01

There was some evidence that students were less confident of the content for this part of the course than they showed when writing their essays. This may be linked to the focus of the question being on the last part of the specification but the transformation of monarchy in the years 1678 to 1702, and particularly after the Glorious Revolution, is a central theme of the Stuart century. Students would benefit from the use of precisely selected illustrative context to reinforce their evaluation of the extracts. Stronger responses were able to refer to various measures of the 'financial revolution', how Parliament was able to limit the monarchy, new taxes or the continuing power and influence of the monarchy. The strongest responses were able to isolate the overall message of the extract and its sub-parts and directly evaluate how convincing this was in relation to their contextual knowledge. This was best done when approached in a structured way by those students who took each extract in turn.

Question 02

The majority of students had a sound general grasp of the narrative of the years 1603-29. Some students limited their answer by not covering the full scope of the period, writing too much about James or not moving beyond 1627. Another limiting element was the range of factors students introduced. Most notable for some was the limited focus on personality. The strongest responses recognised the importance of personality but were able to link this to the other main factors of the period, finance, foreign policy, favourites, religion and parliamentary radicalism. This was most effective when underpinned by a clear conceptual understanding, notably the importance of personality in a time of Personal Monarchy.

Question 03

Stronger responses tended to illustrate the direct link between religion and politics in this period. They also tended to be clearer on key examples of religious radicalism, particularly in the New Model Army, millenarianism or the emergence of new groups like the Quakers. There were some

impressive treatments of Cromwell as a source of stability and instability. An issue with responses to this question was coverage of the period. Why treatment is not expected to be extensive some students just wrote about the 1640s or just the 1650s. Few went beyond the Humble Petition and Advice of 1657. Those that did cover the post 1657 period wrote some excellent illustration of the impact of the Quaker fear of 1659-60.

Question 04

As with question 2, too many students did not cover the scope of the question or limited themselves to a few factors within the period rather than a breadth approach. Many did not consider the apparent strengths of Charles' position after 1681 or the fact that he died in his bed as a significant personal success given his primary aim of 'not going on his travels again'. Some students limited their answer to the themes of religion and finance; others spent too long writing about foreign policy. The strongest responses were able to approach the question of success from different perspectives – Charles' aim, the Political Nation and the structure of the state. As part of this, some considered success in the short term and long term. Those who were able to link success to concepts, particularly that of reform or the 'crisis of state', clearly showed a deeper level of understanding of the period and the concepts of Restoration and settlement.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.