
A-level

History

2M Wars and Welfare: Britain in Transition, 1906-1957
Report on the Examination

7042/2M
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Question 1

Overall this question was generally well answered. An increasing number of students did not, however, comment on one aspect of the sources. For example some students wrote very well about the content and ignored the provenance or increasingly the other way round. This limited the mark of these answers to the bottom of level 3. The best answers made good comments about the provenance of the sources and placed them into context using own knowledge and made good use of the content.

Some students took a 'line by line' approach saying one sentence is valuable but the next is not which weakened the answer but students could still get a level 4 with this approach. Provenance was less well used than content with many students making basic comments about the author or the type of source used. Contextual own knowledge was quite strong with students referring to the Suffragettes and Suffragists in A and the dilution agreement for sources B and C. Some students wrote extensively about the Suffragettes which did not help the answer. Students were less inclined this year to make a comparison between the sources which is not needed for this question and this helped the answers. There was an increasing trend to not link to the question. Students need to ensure that they look at value in relation to the topic given in the question. The best approaches did this by considering each source individually and coming to a conclusion as to each source's value.

Question 2

This was the least popular essay question and though there were some good answers there were a lot of students who did not focus on the question. Some students took this question to be about unemployment in the 1920's and did not link this to the election. This limited the level that they were rewarded for their answer. The best answers considered the manifestos of the political parties, considering the impact of unemployment and then balanced these with other factors at play in the election such as the franchise extension and Labour's desire for a social commonwealth. A limited number of students were able to write a convincing judgement for this question.

Question 3

This was a popular and well answered question. Most students had a good knowledge of the radical political groups, although there was a tendency to give more emphasis to the British Union of Fascists rather than the Communists despite the Communist Party being more successful in terms of gaining seats in government. There were a large number of students who did not achieve balance in their answers to this question either by dismissing the threat of the radical parties or arguing that they were a threat. This limited the answers to level 3. The best students were able to consider the level of threat the radical parties posed and consider this threat in relation to other threats the government faced at the time such as those from abroad and the Abdication crisis. Students were also able to look at how the actions of the government lessened the threats from radical groups from legislation passed. Students were able to write a more successful judgement in answer to this question than in question 2.

Question 4

This was the most popular essay question. Students had an impressive range of knowledge about Britain in the 1950s. The best answers were able to compare areas where there had been success in Britain to areas where there were still struggles such as immigration and the experiences of immigrants and women. Most students found it easy to write about the social improvements of the time and use specific knowledge to back up their answers. The economy was also well used to look at both strengths and limitations e.g. stop-go. There were some students who tried to write about political issues such as the weakness and splits in the Labour party and this was given credit where it was linked to the question. There were some students who wanted to just write about the introduction of prescription charges which of course was outside the date range of the question but where this was linked it was credited. This question provoked more unbalanced responses than the other two questions with weaker answers either saying Britain had never had it so good or that the statement was invalid. This limited responses to level 3. There were many impressive answers to this question with a good range of judgements.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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