
AS-LEVEL HISTORY

Component 7041/2A
Report on the Examination

Specification 7041
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Component 7041/2A

Royal Authority and the Angevin Kings, 1154–1216 Component 2A: The Reign of Henry II, 1154–1189

General Comments

This was a small and fairly specialised entry and many centres seemed familiar with the topics from the legacy specification, although it was pleasing that students had clearly engaged with the additional depth required for the new specification. Many had clearly read more widely than just the standard textbooks on offer and most seemed to manage the timing within the examination, producing two thorough answers. There was some excellent knowledge on display from students who had clearly prepared thoroughly.

Section A

Question 1

The majority of students managed to access these sources, and showed understanding of the content and arguments being put forward. This bodes well for the future as medieval primary sources can be quite intimidating and so it was pleasing to see high levels of interaction from students.

Source A offered students lots of material for discussion and there was some very good debate on ways in which the source offered value or had limitations. For example, students debated the extent to which Henry could really be viewed as a defender of ecclesiastical interests or strove diligently to keep the peace. There was some good own knowledge on display. A minority misinterpreted what the source was arguing and twisted the meaning to fit the evidence they wished to use; for example 'he never laid any grievous burden on his realm' was taken by some as not valuable as Henry caused the Great Rebellion – this was deemed a tenuous point at best.

Source B equally offered students good opportunities for debate, with many picking up on the arguments about Henry's relationships with the Church and the barons. Some students made less convincing statements about Henry being an adulterer through his marriage to Eleanor, or argued that Henry's approach outside of England was not 'vigorous' because he gained some territories through diplomacy rather than fighting, but generally the standard of own knowledge was good.

Students found the approach to provenance and tone much more challenging. The best students considered who was writing the sources and how their contact with Henry, or indeed lack of, might have influenced them and thus affected value. There were also sensible comments on when the sources were written and some good debates on possible motives for writing. Most students correctly identified that A was overly positive and B was very negative in tone, but few linked this to value. Links to value were often quite vague and there was a significant number of students who made bland and unsupported statements about bias and reliability. Some students seemed confused about what the question was asking and became distracted, debating utility, reliability and whether or not the sources were convincing. A small minority were clearly unaware of the meaning of 'invaluable'.

Most students did strive to reach a judgement about which source had the greater value, although often these judgements were rather unsupported and relied upon vague comments about ‘number of correct facts’ or bias.

Section B

Question 02

This was the less popular essay choice. Although there were a number of very good answers, many students who chose this question seemed unsure of how to achieve a balanced answer. Many seemed happy to discuss Henry’s relationship with the Church in general terms, but seemed vague on the specific details and examples to support. Good answers usually referred to the terms of the Compromise of Avranches and what this meant in reality for the King. These answers showed an understanding that, whilst Henry seemed to lose in his power struggle with the Church, in reality he still retained royal control over many areas of Church life. A minority of students misunderstood the question and wasted time describing and debating the dispute with Thomas Becket.

Question 03

This was a popular question with students, and many demonstrated excellent subject knowledge in their answers. A significant number of answers showed detailed awareness of the ways in which Henry restored royal authority after 1155 and could make analytical links to his motives. Students seemed aware of the need for balance and showed flexibility in their arguments as to potential ‘other’ motives. Some found the counter-argument to money a little more difficult and so opted for a rather bland statement that it was to ‘restore royal authority’, which limited marks. Good answers perhaps opted for controlling the barons or a genuine desire to install a fairer legal system. Some students were a little vague on which actions did show a desire for money, although good answers recognised that there were a number of issues which could be included, such as the reforms to the Exchequer or the Cartae Baronum. Unfortunately, some students ignored the end date of 1166 and so wasted some time here. A minority simply described what Henry did, rather than considering why, although subject knowledge still tended to be quite strong.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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