
AS

History

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Report on the Examination

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General comments

Most students were able to use their time well in this paper 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 slightly more popular, but there was, nevertheless, a range of stronger 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.

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 indicating the importance of Berlin to east-west relations. The best answers evaluated the provenance by looking at the context of the source rather than just making generalised comments on the value and limitations of television speeches. In this case, America's humiliation over the Bay of Pigs and the fact that Kennedy had recently returned from the Vienna Summit where he had been bullied by Khrushchev over Berlin helps to explain the purpose and tone of the speech. The provenance of Source B caused problems for some students who focused on the word 'official' as meaning that the source must also be 'truthful'; this limited their understanding of the source and thus their analysis of the value of the source.

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 Source B indicates, students should read the full source before commenting on the provenance as this will give them a better understanding of the context of the source beyond what is just written in the introduction to the source.

As far as the second element is concerned, most students had little difficulty in understanding the content of the two sources. Many had a good knowledge of the Berlin crisis, 58 – 61 and the factors surrounding the emigration of thousands of refugees from East to west Berlin, and this knowledge was used to evaluate the claims made in the sources. The less successful answers focused too much on earlier events in Germany such as its division following the wartime conferences and the Berlin Blockade of 1948.

In terms of the comparison, more able students did as asked and commented on the 'value' of the sources as evidence and made a judgement as to how far each would contribute to an understanding of how Berlin contributed to east-west tensions.

Section B**Question 2**

Students were familiar with the reasons for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance by 1946 and many were able to offer a range of reasons including disagreements over Germany, the actions of Stalin, the character and actions of Truman and Atomic diplomacy. However, some struggled to address the focus of the question on ideology as a factor. Although most understood the key ideological differences between communism and capitalism many did not then always link these to Stalin's actions after 1945 and the growing Western concern of these actions as shown in Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech and the Kennan Telegram.

It was relevant to bring in longer term reasons for the growth of distrust, such as events in World War Two, even events in the 1920s and 1930s. However, some students focused too much on the longer-term issues and then failed to deal with the breakdown of relations which occurred between 1945 and 1946.

Question 3

This question was generally very well done. Most students had a good knowledge of the actions of the US in China and Korea – and many also were able to analyse the impact of US policies in Taiwan, Japan and Vietnam. Weaker answers tended to be more narrative of events but there were some excellent answers that remained focused on the issue of containment and were able to provide precise detail to support arguments on success and failure.

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.