
A-level History

7042/1C The Tudors: England, 1485–1603
Report on the Examination

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General Comments

This was a new format and one which students took very seriously. Most students answered three questions fully, writing developed responses. The majority almost completed a 16 page answer booklet, some going onto extra sheets. The extract responses suggested that students had spent the recommended time on this question, but had not produced a full answer at the expense of writing brief essays. Some students had clearly planned their answers, whilst the plans are not read or marked, a considered structure tended to lead to a coherent response. There was clear evidence that students were able to consider breadth issues and to evaluate developments over a period of time, but avoided assertion by selecting appropriate relevant supporting evidence.

01

The compulsory extract question was a new style question which built on skills students had developed at AS. A significant difference was that at A-Level, unlike the AS question, students are not required to compare the extracts to state which is the most convincing. A significant number of students did provide a comparison. Students were rewarded not for the comparison but for the contributions to the evaluation of individual extracts. In future years students, should avoid comparing the extracts. Most students were familiar with the issue of the Mid Tudor Crisis, in general and the problems specific to each reign; however, students need to use their knowledge to evaluate the extracts rather than presenting the material and fitting the extracts into their own knowledge. The major issue with responses to this question was that many did not consider the overall argument of the extract but approached their evaluation on a 'line-by-line' basis, sometimes focusing on individual phrases rather than regarding sub clauses as part of, or even a qualification of, an overall argument. The better responses often were shorter but had a considered evaluation of the overall argument and then used the elements of the argument to evaluate its overall convincingness. The key message for students is to practise reading for meaning to establish the overall argument and then to assess how far this can be supported or challenged within the context of the specific question asked.

A - This was not well understood by many students who focused on elements and stated that Jones saw the period as a crisis because of the international situation, or the economic problems which led to civil strife. There was considerable focus on Jones' assessment of Henry, Edward and Mary; these were generally challenged. As with all the extracts students demonstrated their recall of a prodigious range of information about the period. What was not well done was the consideration of the continuity, power and security of the Tudor monarchy with a particular reference to the security of the succession. Some students did consider the Acts of Succession and the crisis of Lady Jane Grey; some did link these with religion, but the paradox of Mary and her desire for a Catholic Tudor succession was not really considered.

B – The responses to B and C showed a wealth of social and economic material and was used to broaden the evaluation of the crisis from a political focus. Most students were able to evaluate Loades' view that there was no general crisis during this period, some did focus on authority. There was a tendency to select parts of statements rather than to consider the qualification which was bring offered. For example, the qualification 'peculiar to this period' was not considered when Loades was castigated for his lack of understanding of the social and economic crisis, nor was there an appreciation of Loades' qualification that it was serious inflation that was short lived, rather than inflation per se. Good knowledge was demonstrated about the rebellions to assess whether, in reality they were relatively harmless. The better responses linked this assessment back to whether they were a challenge to authority.

C – Students were generally supportive of the view that the people of England experienced a profound psychological shock during the mid-Tudor period which constituted a crisis. Evidence was used to support this from across the period. There seemed to be greater difficulty in accepting the Smith's view of the failings of the monarchs with the assessment that what was remarkable was the relative strength of the government. Partly this difficulty was the focus of assessing the individual failings, rather than considering the wider issue of government.

02

This question was attempted by the vast majority of the students and was done with varying degrees of success. It was clearly a topic which was very familiar. Students were well versed in the steps which Henry took early in his reign to establish his authority, such as the dating of his reign, calling parliament and marriage to Elizabeth of York. Most were able to demonstrate that to establish himself as monarch, Henry had to control the nobility; details of the challenges of the pretenders, rebellions and foreign policy were well known and used to support the view that by 1509 Henry had established monarchical power at home and abroad. However, too many students failed to consider the considerable limitations to Henry's authority, for example: his dependence on the nobility to control the regions was not fully explored; his draconian use of bonds and recognizances in angering the nobility was not developed; his attempts to secure the succession, which were endangered by the death of his sons and his wife, compounded by the youth of Prince Henry, were only sometime referred to. Whilst Henry had established treaties with the major powers to prevent them supporting claimants to the throne was recognised, his exclusion from the League of Cambrai and the existence of Yorkist claimants, which still left him vulnerable, was not often considered. Students are not expected to be familiar with the views of historians, although John Guy did feature heavily in responses, but they need to be aware that, at A Level, when they 'assess...' they should consider more than one answer to the question.

03

This was the least popular question on the paper. It produced some excellent responses which considered the changes in government throughout the period, from Cardinal Wolsey's attempt to change access to the law, changes to financing the crown and the composition of the Privy Council, through to the changes introduced by Cromwell. The good responses examined how far these changes were fundamental, or to what extent they were pragmatic and short lived. Generally, responses focused on central government, particularly the role of the King and parliament, but there were some excellent responses which also considered local government. Unfortunately, there were also a considerable number of responses which lacked an awareness of changes to government during this period and tended to write about personal or conciliar government, perhaps with reference to factionalism in the 1540s and the use of the dry-stamp. Examiners always try to mark positively, but these responses had only a limited understanding of the question.

04

This was the second most popular of the options. Students who answered this were generally well informed of religious changes and challenges during the reign of Elizabeth. The better responses established the framework of the settlement at the start of the essay and examined the principles on which it was based. There was considerable material presented on the challenges posed by the Catholics and by the puritan/ Presbyterian wing. The Vestarian controversy and the Northern Rebellion were generally well known, as were Mary Queen of Scots and the priests from Douai. The majority of responses were able to demonstrate the state of the Church and Catholicism at the end of Elizabeth's reign. Most concluded that it was well established by 1603, as much as anything as a result of Elizabeth living so long. It is not expected that students should study beyond Elizabeth's death, but it might be relevant that the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 and the

Gunpowder Plot of 1605 suggest that. for the two main opponents of the terms of the settlement, not everything was sorted by the time Elizabeth died. Some students did write at length about the Armada on the basis that the establishment of the Church settlement had to be recognised by foreign powers and that Philip continually supported opponent to Elizabeth's religious policy. This is an acceptable point but material on the Armada need to be made relevant rather than used descriptively.

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.