



A-LEVEL HISTORY

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

7042
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General

Overall, there were some very encouraging responses to the paper this year. Students seemed to be much more confident as to what was required both in terms of question 01 and the essay questions. There are a couple of general points worth making. In terms of question 01, it is very useful where students support their evaluations with direct reference to the extract, usually in terms of a brief quote. The essay responses are generally clearly structured, although there was a noticeable concern that students were either re-stating the question as an introduction, or more worryingly, re-wording the question to make a response that they felt more comfortable with – one that they had done in class. The best essays summarise their argument in response to the question in the introduction and then structure a balanced response based on clearly selected evidence.

Question 01

There were some very good answers to the extract question this year. Most students structured their work to consider, in turn, how convincing each of the extracts are. It is common practice to address the overall argument of the extract first, before considering the elements of the extract in terms of support and challenge. The review of the extract is then concluded with a judgement. Some students planned their response to the extract question. A real advantage of this was that they considered where to deploy their own knowledge, rather than repeating the same information, usually about Mary Queen of Scots, in response to each extract. It should also be emphasised that stating what an interpretation does not include, evaluation by omission, is not valid.

There are some approaches within this, which students should try to avoid: the comment on the overall argument should reflect the application of the focus of the question to the extract, not simply be a paraphrase of the extract itself. The presentation of the analysis suggesting ways in which the extract is convincing, or otherwise, should avoid identifying elements and then fact-checking against own knowledge. The key aim is to evaluate the extracts within the context of own knowledge. The own knowledge demonstrated in answer to this year's question was impressive with students referencing a wide range of issues, supported with specific examples.

In Extract A MacCaffrey presents a dominant Elizabeth who subordinated both Court and Council. In this extract Elizabeth is presented as demonstrating a clear political insight which underpinned her authority. Her judgement was respected and she was sure-footed in her decisions, putting the political needs of the country above her personal preferences. Only in her treatment of Mary Queen of Scots could her mastery be questioned. Most students were able to identify and support her ruthlessness and challenged her political judgement in her later career. The main issue which few were able to address was the statement relating to her control of policy in 1569, which was a reference to her religious policy which allowed a degree of freedom for Catholics. It was not a statement on the seriousness of the Northern Rebellion.

AGR Smith, in extract B, presents a dominant Elizabeth who should personally be credited with the triumphs of the period. In his argument, Smith identifies two key areas of success: Elizabeth demonstrated real skill in financial management; she was personally responsible for developing measures to ensure that England remained solvent. Secondly, Smith argues that Elizabeth showed real skill in choosing ministers whose advice she relied on. However, whilst she delegated authority to them in routine matters, she made the final decisions. Most responses to this extract did pick up the key issues. There was, however, some misinterpretation as to what was understood by Elizabeth's admirable sense in money matters'. It was evident in answers to this question, although

was also obvious elsewhere in the paper, that students are not clear about the difference between finance and the economy. Elizabeth's skills, as identified by Smith, related to her financial policies – the economy was very much outside of her control. It would be helpful if students were also aware of fiscal policies relating to taxation.

Extract C generated considerable debate. Ryrie's argument is that Elizabeth ruled by inaction. Ryrie argues that this could be described as paralysis. He argues that where Elizabeth did act it was preceded by significant deliberation and obstruction. A clear example given by Ryrie is that of the Queen's marriage. The partial exception was foreign policy although the intervention there was the minimum possible. Elizabethan politics was not a world of success but of frustration. Some students found this the most convincing of all the interpretations, whereas others struggled to find any evidence to support Ryrie. Responses to this extract were often the briefest as students had spent a considerable amount of time on the first two extracts.

Question 02

This was the second most popular of the three essay questions. The question focused on challenges to Henry VII in the form of rebellion; clearly these ended with the Cornish Rebellion and the threat of Perkin Warbeck. What didn't end with the century was Henry VII's policies of centralisation and extending monarchical control into the localities through a variety of mechanisms. Changes to central and local government are key elements of the specification. Henry's extension of monarchical control into the localities in the years 1500-09 did not result in rebellion. However, his earlier impact on the localities of Yorkshire and Cornwall, principally although not exclusively, through taxation did. Good students were able to write about the murder of Northumberland and interference in the control of tin-mining in Cornwall, almost all students were able to present a very convincing counter argument to the local impact of taxation in these counties by considering the threats posed by Lovell, Simnel and Warbeck. Although students wrote about Simnel being crowned in Ireland, it was interesting that few considered what the reasons for the Irish were in challenging Henry VII in this way.

Question 03

This was the most popular of the essay question with almost all students attempting it. Students were generally well informed, although the 1520s tended to be less secure. There was a very clear understanding of the initial attempts to regain territory in France and to assert the potential of Henry's ambition. The limitations of the capture of Tournai and Therouanne were well documented. There was some confusion as to which James, King of Scotland, had been killed and who was the infant who succeeded him. Equally, the capture of Boulogne was moved back from the 1540s. The balance in this question was clear, although some wrote exclusively about attempts to achieve peace. It is worthwhile reminding students that they should both support and challenge the judgements in the question. The best students wrote convincingly of Henry VIII's reactive foreign policy – clearly, he wanted to achieve the chivalric pinnacle of Henry V but was forced to recognise his own limitations, or was forced to by Wolsey. The responses to Charles V and Francis I's greater financial resources were considered to present a balanced judgement. A number of students wrote extensively about the annulment which clearly had foreign policy elements but should not have dominated responses.

Question 04

This was the least popular of the essay questions, but the responses were very encouraging. Students seemed very well informed on the changes to, and consequences of, population growth. A few students did write at some length about the impact of the Poor Law and, where this was related to the causes of poverty, this was rewarded. There were some very interesting observations about the long-term consequences of the dissolution of the monasteries in terms of poor relief which showed a good conceptual awareness, the long-term impact on real wages and inflation, of the debasement of the coinage was appreciated by most. There was an understanding of changes to agriculture, especially of enclosure and, more importantly the movement to pasture, on employment opportunities, migration and real wages. Poor harvests and disease were examined in the short and long term and there were some very interesting local examples given. The example of death by starvation in Newcastle was linked to poor harvests, but it is equally valid to consider problems with distribution. In the context of supply, it is also worth considering the role of land-owners in holding back, and exporting grain, in the shortage of food. Bread riots were not just a feature of the French Revolution.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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