

A-level History Feedback on the 2022 exams (Component 1)

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Welcome



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Session structure

This training session supports understanding of the awarding process and the implications of the cohort's results, helping you to understand student performance.

We're focusing on the following:

- How grades have been awarded this year
- Performance headlines
- Area 1: Advanced Information and prep for the exams
- Area 2: Question One and AO3
- Area 3: The essay questions and AO1
- Teaching and learning activities.

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Outcomes of A-level History

Grade	% of students in grade
A*	12.25
A	34.9
B	64.1
C	86.1
D	96.3
E	99.3
U	100.0

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Overall analysis from the report on the exam

- The Advanced Information was generally used effectively, although a good number of candidates presented prepared answers with only a loose focus on the set question.
- The skills required to respond to Question 1 were still somewhat undeveloped.
- A good number of responses to Question 1 offered a comparison of the extracts, which is simply not needed.
- The essay question saw an increase in narrative and in overly long, contextual type, introductions.
- There was a perceived dip in the effectiveness of a number of skills associated with success in both AO1 and AO3.

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Key area 1: Advanced Information and preparation for the exams

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Overview

- The Advanced Information sought to identify the main content for each question with the intention of keeping revision focused.
- The Advanced Information was never really intended as a means of question spotting. Where this took place, it was generally unhelpful.
- Too many candidates had closely prepared, set responses to what they thought might be on the paper. As a result, their responses were not fully focused on the question asked.
- A good number of candidates learned all that there was to learn on whole bullet points indicated in the Advanced Information. They then proceeded to include all of this material, even if the question asked for only part of it.
- The benefits of the Advanced Information were no doubt seen mainly in the classroom and in revision.

Key area 2: Question 1 – AO3

'Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these three extracts are in relation to...'

Identify, understand and evaluate arguments in each extract in relation to the focus of the question.

Deploy contextual knowledge selectively and relevantly to assess how convincing the arguments are.

Component 1: Question 1, generic mark scheme

Level	Understanding of arguments/ interpretations	Evaluation of arguments	Contextual own knowledge
Level 5 (25–30)	Very good	Strong and well-supported.	Very good; convincingly deployed.
Level 4 (19–24)	Good	Good and mostly well-supported.	Good; convincingly deployed.
Level 3 (13–18)	Reasonable	Some; possibly imbalanced or lacking depth.	Present; accurately deployed.
Level 2 (7–12)	Partial (accurate for at least two extracts)	Little evaluation; may be generalist.	Some present.
Level 1 (1–6)	Partial (accurate for 1 or general and limited for 2/3)	Generalist with inaccuracy and irrelevance.	General awareness; limited.

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What was demonstrated well?

- Students were able to show a good ability to identify and to extract specific arguments from the material provided.
- There was a general awareness that evaluation of views and opinions was key, rather than simple commentary or adding detail to information already given.
- The students' knowledge was generally good, with evidence that some students had an excellent understanding illustrated by effective use of this knowledge.
- Quotation was used much more frequently than in the past, but this was short and to-the-point. It was quotation for a purpose.
- There was good use of dates and specific names/titles drawn from own knowledge in order to support evaluation.

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What was demonstrated well?

- Students were successful in establishing what the overall theme or overall argument of the extract might be.
- The better responses did much more than simply identify argument, but engaged with debate to challenge and corroborate.
- Identification of what was not in the extract was very limited, and was only referred to if directly relevant to an argument identified in the extract.
- The line-by-line approach was avoided, as was the pre-scripted approach of a certain number of views supported and a set number not.
- The response was extract driven and it arrived at a balanced judgement related to the focus set in the question.

What was demonstrated less well?

- There was less evidence that the arguments in the extracts had been understood.
- A line-by-line approach dominated, usually with a straightforward extraction of factual material.
- There was less evidence that the student understood what an opinion was.
- Overly lengthy quotations showed skills of comprehension, but little else.
- There was a marked increase in attempts to compare the extracts, often in lengthy conclusions.
- Knowledge was not linked to challenging or corroborating the views in the extracts.

What was demonstrated less well?

- Students did not read the whole extract before answering the question, hence responses were contradictory or did not convey a sense of overall understanding.
- The historical focus of the question was ignored.
- Some students made heavy use of prepared structuring and there was less evidence that the extract was being responded to in a bespoke manner.
- Overly lengthy responses to the first extract often led to a cursory treatment of the third.
- Material was extracted out of context, thereby changing the overall thrust of the historian's argument.

Characteristics of higher responses

- A clear line of argument about how convincing an opinion or view present in the extract was.
- A short, summative conclusion for each extract was often useful in reinforcing judgement.
- The historical focus was repeated in the response and was keenly addressed throughout.
- There was evidence drawn from both knowledge and the extract, but this was used to support evaluation.
- Students drew evidence from the whole extract, rather than just the first couple of lines.

Progression through the levels

- Unless all three extracts are considered, the mark is limited to Level 1 or 2.
- Simple extraction of information may show some understanding of the extract but will not provide an answer to the set question and so is limited to the lower levels.
- Similarly, simply describing the period set in the question will limit marks to the lower levels.
- Only when the question is beginning to be addressed and there is some effort to evaluate identified argument can the mark progress to Level 3, but this needs to be done for all three extracts.
- The higher levels are awarded to those that show a clear understanding of the arguments in the extracts and provide a substantiated, balanced evaluation.

Teaching and learning: Activity

Consider skills progression

- Identify 2–3 arguments in the extract. Identify 2–3 facts.
- Establish the main argument of the extract.
- Evaluate the a given argument.
- Set a past question.

Set a student's essay as an interpretation exercise

- 'How convincing are the views of this extract to a historian studying the causes of the Feb 1917 Revolution?'
- Reinforces essay skills, good for peer marking, and encourages academic critique

Example material

We'll now look at some student responses in the *Pre-event booklet*.

Which level would you place each response in for AO3?

Why would you place it in this level?

Key area 3: The essay questions and AO1

- Clear and full understanding of the question and its demands.
- A balanced, analytical response which reviews the issues raised by the question.
- Appropriate and full coverage of the chronology of the question, with appropriate supporting information.
- Judgements on the issues, either throughout the answer or in an extended conclusion.

Questions 2, 3 and 4: Generic mark scheme

Level	Understanding	Knowledge	Features, Issues, concepts	Comment and balance	Organisation	Judgement
5 (21–25)	Very good	Range; specific precise	Very good understanding	Fully analytical/balanced	Good; effective	Well-substantiated
4 (1–20)	Good	Range Specific precise	Good; some conceptual awareness	Analytical/balanced	Good; effective	Some; may only be partially substantiated

Questions 2, 3 and 4: Generic mark scheme

Level	Understanding	Knowledge	Features, Issues, concepts	Comment and balance	Organisation	Judgement
3 (11–15)	Reasonable	Range; may be imprecise	Some; may be generalisation	Links to question; some balance	Effective	Partial –thin
2 (6–10)	Partial	Some – limited scope	Some – may be irrelevance	Limited or descriptive	Some	Undeveloped
1 (1–5)	Limited	Limited	Inaccuracy or irrelevance	Vague/generalist	Limited	Un-supported

Overview

- There was generally a good awareness of structuring and also of the need to offer an opinion in relation to the set question.
- Most essays covered the set date range effectively, although there remained a tendency for some to focus on a very narrow aspect of what is a question requiring an answer in breadth.
- Knowledge was sound, although there was a good deal of supposition and speculation masquerading as established fact.
- Balance was better understood than in previous years, but there remains a tendency to simply describe an alternative opinion rather than to engage in debate.

What was demonstrated well?

- There was an increased awareness of the need to provide a clear and early answer to the set question.
- Introductions were generally focused on providing an answer, and successfully identified some supporting material to move this away from assertion. They were not contextual.
- Balance was used to advance the overall argument, rather than simply to describe an alternative view.
- Knowledge was demonstrated very well by some, not simply as factual recall but in its use to support the argument being advanced.
- The demands of a breadth paper were fully addressed.

What was demonstrated less well?

- There remained a tendency towards narrative and description. This indicated a focus on knowledge rather than understanding. Simple factual recall alone is not enough for a strong response.
- Whilst paragraphing was generally effective, these were often disjointed and did not fit comfortably within the overall essay.
- Breadth remains an issue for some. Whilst some focused on a narrow issue alone, the question demands coverage of a chronological range.
- Factual support was not always specific. The use of dates and period specific terminology was often less effective.

Characteristics of higher responses

- A short, focused introduction that established an answer to the question.
- Paragraphing with a purpose; a range of factors linked to provide a convincing, overall argument.
- Factual information used in support of argument and not simply present for its own sake.
- A balanced argument rather than a balanced description.
- A clear, short conclusion in which nothing new was raised.

Progression through the levels

- Lower levels are typically narrative or predominantly assertive.
- Factual recall alone typifies the lower levels.
- The response progresses to Level 3 when it begins to answer the set question. Typically a short sentence at the end of each paragraph, or a judgemental conclusion.
- Answers that lead with argument and use knowledge in support of this, are typical of Level 4 and Level 5.
- The higher level responses are analytical with a clear judgement based on a balanced evaluation of different views. The student's own voice is dominant however.

Teaching and learning: Activity

- Encourage students to identify in one sentence what the answer to the question is, ie what their essay is arguing.
- Encourage students to identify facts and opinion in their essay, but also explain what job the fact is doing, ie what argument or view it is supporting.
- Encourage students to annotate each paragraph, identifying exactly how each paragraph advances the overall argument.
- Set essays as interpretation exercises.
- Give students five minutes to write an introduction to a set question as a lesson starter.

Example responses

We'll now look at some student responses in the *Pre-event booklet*.

Which level would you place each one in for AO1?

Why would you place it in this level?

Any questions?



Resources

Take advantage of our extra resources in the 'Plan', 'Teach' and 'Assess' sections of our website.

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AS and A-level History

7041, 7042

Find all the information, support and resources you need to deliver our specification.

Teaching from: September 2015
Exams from: 2016 (AS), 2017 (A-level)
QAN code: 601/4974/7 (AS), 601/4973/5 (A-level)

[Specification](#) [Planning resources](#) [Teaching resources](#) [Assessment resources](#) [Key dates](#)



Event materials

The electronic materials from this event will be available to download shortly. If you aren't able to download them at this time, they will be made available to you in the customer portal of our online booking system.

Once we receive notification that you have attended the course, you will be sent a certificate of attendance email. When you receive the email, please log in to your account and all the event materials will be available on the 'my resources' tab on the welcome screen.

Get in touch

Our friendly team will be happy to support you between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

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Thank you
