



AS-LEVEL

History

7041/2P: The Transformation of China, 1936-1962
Report on the Examination

7041
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General comments

Across the range of student ability, there were genuine and diligent attempts to respond to the questions which demonstrated that students had been well prepared and engaged by the centres; consequently, the paper produced a wide spread of marks. Students approached Question 01 using some effective techniques. In terms of the essay questions, Question 02 was more popular, though Question 03 produced a slightly wider spread of marks.

Question 01

In this fourth year of the current AS-level specification, students have clearly responded to the advice of previous reports and effective centre preparation. All answers seen approached each source in turn and made attempts to compare them in a concluding paragraph. Whilst some students dealt more effectively with one of the two sources (usually A was more effectively considered than B), all attempted to consider both. All students were able to provide some valid contextual knowledge for the Great Leap Forward, and it was gratifying to find a number of high level responses. As the specification matures, the quality of responses is clearly improving.

The students found the language of both sources accessible and there was a general focus on the issue of 'impact'. There were several ways in which students were able to make connections and comparisons between the two sources, one being that Source A showed the attitudes and exaggerations which produced the situation Peng lamented over in Source B. Some students produced some very reasonable and supported comparisons.

In terms of Source A, most students were able to make reasonable and supported comments about the value of the source in terms of 'impact', with most focusing well on the 'walking on two legs' policy and the implications of this. Contextual knowledge, based on peasant enthusiasm for the policy, was often well developed. Some students were very effective in terms of drawing out the limitations of Source A as evidence by making reference, for example, to the poor quality of the steel produced or how the policy distracted the peasants from agricultural work. Whilst virtually all students considered provenance, this was in general less well done than the evaluation of content; some comment was rather 'stock' (for example by dismissing Hunan as just one province in China), and comment about the source's value as propaganda was often not fully developed with an understanding of motive or purpose. Similarly, there were often references to the tone of the source but without linking this to its value as evidence. Whilst stronger responses made effective use of the provenance, this is an area that centres might wish to focus on with future cohorts of students.

Source B followed a similar pattern, in that students generally displayed reasonable understanding of the content but were rather less effective in handling the provenance. Some very strong development of Peng's 'letter of opinion' was seen, with many students able to draw examples from the source and develop them with good contextual understanding of the issues that had become clearer to many within the CCP by mid 1959. Whilst some students were able to consider the significance of the date and Peng's motives in a sharp manner, some comment on provenance was more 'stock' and there was occasional confusion between Peng and Deng Xiaoping that blunted students' evaluation. As with Source A, some comment on tone was not effectively developed to consider the tone in terms of value.

Question 02

More popular than the other essay question, many students were clearly attracted to Question 02 because of their understanding of the role of Mao in the development of the CCP. Some strong material was seen to support the 'stated factor'. However, there was a tendency to consider general issues that produced support for the CCP – such as their actions during the Sino-Japanese War – and attribute it to Mao generally rather than consider Mao's specific contribution in terms of policy and ideology. This was credited if accompanied with appropriate comment, but this then restricted the range of material that students could bring to bear in considering 'other factors' as was necessary to construct some balance. Students who followed this method often offered material based around Jiang Jieshi and the GMD to show other reasons why the CCP was supported in 1946 but again this needed to be accompanied with appropriate comment linked to the question to be credited. Some students approached the essay as one focused on CCP strengths compared to GMD weaknesses, and arguments were not always seen to be convincing.

Question 03

Fewer students chose this essay question, but most of those who did possessed good understanding of the mass mobilisation campaigns, with 'Resist America, Aid Korea' and the Three/Five Antis commonly cited as examples, accompanied by valid comment about how they helped to consolidate communist power. Balance was achieved through considering other factors such as terror and land reform, though some students cited these as campaigns which (as with Question 02) then restricted their potential range of 'other factors'. There were some misconceptions seen in responses. For example, CCP policy towards women was cited as a mass mobilisation campaign, material based on the campaigns later in the 1950s was sometimes mistakenly deployed and parts of responses were sometimes rooted in the Civil War. Some students successfully offered well supported and balanced answers with valid analysis in terms of the question, and these achieved higher level marks.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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