

AS

HISTORY

7041/1K: The making of a Superpower: USA, 1865–1975
Report on the Examination

7041
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General

In general students responded well to the demands of this paper, many showing good knowledge and understanding of the period. It was apparent that most students had a clear idea of the differing requirements of the extract question in Section A and the essay question in Section B. There was no evidence that timing was a problem for students and most answers were of a reasonable length. Most students made a sound attempt at two questions.

There were a number of exceptional scripts, showing depth of knowledge and historical understanding as well as a general awareness of continuity and change. Very few scripts failed to make at least a reasonable response to the paper, although some weaker responses in Section B lacked a range of factual support and balance.

Q 02 was significantly more popular than Q 03.

Section A

Question 01

Students clearly felt comfortable with the subject matter of this question and many wrote enthusiastically on railway development. Answers, however, were not always focused on extract evaluation and there is still a tendency for students to refer to 'sources' rather than 'extracts'. Some responses were quite generalised, and only used supporting material from the extracts. Analysing the extracts in terms of what was omitted was also a feature of less effective answers, often leading to extended passages of description.

Contextual evidence was not always developed and only a few students were able to validate their answers by providing a sufficient range of factual support from their own knowledge. Other students wrote freely about speed and distance of travel, raw materials, settlers, farmers and refrigerated trucks (a particular favourite), but with variable focus on actual extract evaluation. The less effective answers were unable to offer an overview of the extracts, relying instead on a line-by-line approach. In some cases, interpreting the extracts meant simply paraphrasing the content with very little analysis.

Most students understood the need for a valid comparison, which is a key requirement of the question and a very large number of students did this successfully. Good answers emphasised that Extract A offered a completely positive verdict on railway development, while Extract B focused mainly on negative aspects, while at the same time acknowledging that 'railways secured the nation's post-Civil War boom'. Most students considered the two extracts in turn, followed by a comparison. Some students who ran the two extracts side by side with an on-going comparison produced highly effective answers.

Section B**Question 02**

Students appeared to find this question accessible, in part because it allowed them to write extensively on race relations in the South. Many answers showed a detailed knowledge of discriminatory customs and practices. Almost without exception students assessed social tensions, but not all answers considered economic differences. Students wrote effectively on continuing divisions and the failure to reduce tensions. However, some answers struggled to find ways in which divisions were resolved. The most effective responses considered the Reconstruction period as well as the years after 1877. Less effective answers tended to focus on one of these periods only.

Q 03

This was by far the less popular choice of question in Section B. Students found the requirement to assess the extent to which Wilson's 'New Freedom' was based on Roosevelt's reforms quite challenging and fully-developed answers were rare.

Some students were able to write convincingly on either Roosevelt's or Wilson's policies but only a few were able to do both. As result, the quality of comparison was often quite limited. Other students wrote extensively on foreign policy differences, comparing Roosevelt's pro-active/ 'Big Stick' policy with Wilson's approach to World War 1 and his 14 Points.

A small number of answers showed a developed understanding of the ways in which Wilson's policies drew strength from Roosevelt, as well as the ways in which they did not. These answers were analytical, well-rooted in detailed evidence and showed an advanced level of historical awareness.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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