



AS

HISTORY

7041/2A

Report on the Examination

7041

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General comments

Students had clearly revised for this examination and, where popular topics were relevant, they could write with confidence and clarity. However, some of the less mainstream areas of the specification – the rebellions in the 1180s and the Church before Becket for example- seemed to throw some students off their stride. The essays were generally approached well, with a good understanding of the features of a good essay. The source question was much less well answered, and the formulaic approach offered by many resulted in some poorly supported and unconvincing answers.

Question 01

This question posed a number of challenges for many students. Some were well prepared in terms of contextual own knowledge but failed to hit the higher levels of the markscheme through technical errors in how they approached the question. Many students persisted with a very formulaic approach to the sources which meant that the quality of their analysis and evaluation was quite weak. Students should aim to read the sources and consider them holistically, rather than attempting a 'line by line' fact check. Most students remembered to discuss provenance, but this was often poorly developed. The best answers considered the possible strengths and weaknesses of the provenance and then integrated their comments into a wider consideration of the source. For example, one might consider that Gerald in Source A has a reason to be critical of Henry due to his failure to achieve the promotion he wanted. This possible limitation can be seen by the attitude Gerald takes in blaming Henry solely for stirring up trouble with his sons. Philip seems blameless in this source, and it is the provenance which helps the historian to understand this limitation and narrowness of view. A persistent number of students continue to rely upon rote-learned stock phrases about provenance, which were usually offered up and left undeveloped. It is important to note that monks and historians could (and sometimes did) tell untruths. Equally, stating that 'chronicles are written to inform' is not especially helpful or insightful. Stronger answers might say that Rigord was writing a chronicle entitled 'Deeds of Philip Augustus' and the fact that he gave Philip this particular epithet might lead us to consider that he might be quite pro-Philip and anti-Henry. This possible limitation is borne out by some of the content of the source which shows Philip to be shrewd where Henry is cunning and disobedient. Own knowledge could then be deployed to test the accuracy of this line of argument.

Other students struggled with the contextual understanding of the sources. Frequent mistakes included confusion about who Geoffrey was in Source A. Some students simply paraphrased the sources, or their evaluation was simply that this was a primary source and this made it valuable, which is very low level evaluation. Some students failed to make any mention of 'value' and some interchanged value with reliability or validity, which are very different issues. The overall comparisons offered were not often very convincing and many simply decided that B was more valuable as 'A wasn't about Henry and Philip', which demonstrated a basic level of understanding of the content and argument of A.

Question 02

Students showed some confidence with elements of this question, and many were able to provide material which had some balanced debate. Discussion of the threat to royal authority posed by Thomas Becket as Archbishop was especially well supported, although only the best answers had a clear awareness that, by 1166, Becket was in exile and Henry had the support of most of the English Church. Where students dropped marks was often in their failure to go beyond the issue of Becket with any real confidence or detail. As Becket was only Archbishop for the last few years of

this period, there needed to be some specific material on the period 1154-62 to access the higher levels of the mark scheme. Some students opted for an approach which basically stated that ‘the Church was not a threat because other issues were more of a threat’, which was not what the question was asking. Equally, lengthy descriptions of the measures Henry took to restore royal authority were largely irrelevant.

Question 03

This question was slightly more popular than 02 and students showed some good knowledge about the reasons for the defeat of the rebellion. The main discriminator in terms of marks was the quality of the material utilised in the answer as most students were aware of the need to consider more than one possible cause. Some students showed some impressive own knowledge, though some ignored the issue of ‘weak leadership of the rebels’ entirely. Students were sometimes somewhat confused about the Great Rebellion’s course and couldn’t comment on much beyond Henry’s penance and the subsequent capture of the King of Scots. The best answers showed an awareness of the prolonged nature of the rebellion and the various theatres of war which were involved.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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