

A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/1D: Stuart Britain and the Crisis of Monarchy, 1603–1702
Report on the Examination

7042
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General

Whilst more effective answers contained comment shaped to the specific wording of the questions, some students failed to take sufficient care in covering the scope of the essay questions in terms of date range and their specific wording. Another feature of more successful answers was the illustration of conceptual understanding, both of the early modern period in general, and the periods covered by the essays specifically. Command of essay skills, including strong introductions, logical structure and effective deployment of language as an interpretative tool also stood out in the most effective essays. The period between 1640 and 1660 remains the least popular in terms of essay choice and it is clear that some students struggle with the complexity and depth of the narrative of these years when trying to shape illustrative examples to a specific question.

Question 01

In this extract-based question, the most effective answers evaluated each passage in turn and identified both the main arguments and the sub-arguments. However students did not always go on to assess the arguments they had picked out. Good answers were direct in their appraisal of the argument, with reference to the extract content. They evaluated what was written, in relation to the question, with the support of well-linked context. Successful students ably deployed a large range of contextual knowledge across the whole period from 1603 to 1640 and, although the extracts were centred on Puritanism as a main religious theme of these years, able students also used more general religious context from the time, illustrating that Puritanism was defined as much as by what it was against as what it stood for.

Question 02

The most effective responses to this question were not only able to provide a range of reasons for the growth of political and religious radicalism, but also covered the full date range of the question. Generally, students focused more on the years 1646 to 1658. However, the better answers, while still perhaps centred on this period, also offered examples from before 1646 and after 1658. Some students structured their answer effectively around appropriate chronological blocks. For the earlier periods many showed how the religious policies of Charles I, by breaking the Jacobethan balance, generated more religious and political radicalism. Some referred back to 1637 but most assessed the situation c. 1640-42. Such approaches went on to assess how Charles' stance in the years 1646 to 1649 led to even more radical positions. Some showed how the breakdown of authority and the civil war allowed the transmission and flourishing of further radical ideas, but here many needed to be clearer on the range of reasons why war and the New Model Army fostered radicalism. The years when the religious radicals held power, between 1647 and 1660, was commented on in terms of how policies allowed more freedom and how greater 'toleration' permitted further radicalism to develop. As part of this, some focused on Cromwell himself and his desire for godly reformation. The post-Cromwell explosion of the Quaker threat as a reaction to political instability in the years 1658 to 1660 and the increasing threat of Restoration was only touched upon by a few students who made excellent reference to the broader impact of harvest failure and economic hardship as a cause of greater radicalism.

In dealing with authority, focused answers commented on the collapse of the Church of England and state power over the Church, rather than actual policies of rulers, during the 1640 to 1660 period. More effective answers illustrated radicalism with reference to examples, such as the 1640 Root and Branch Petition, the radicalism of Pym or the development of more radical Protestant groups like the Baptists, Fifth Monarchists, Ranters, Muggletonians, the Quakers or individuals like

Thomas Tany, John Biddle and James Nayler. While a high level of specific detail was not expected but some carefully chosen examples strengthened the arguments made. Some more able responses, showed a good deal of conceptual understanding. Some suggested how these groups generated their own radicalism, for example, the Baptists as the 'font of all heresy', or the Levellers and the True Levellers (the Diggers). Others were able to see these groups and the development of radicalism from the context of individuals who went on a 'journey' of religious and political radicalism, like Laurence Clarkson. Even without such high-level comment, most were able to link the conditions of civil war and revolution to the development of religious and political radicalism, especially millenarianism and the influence of developments in Parliament's armies, Eastern Association and New Model Army. Some had plenty to say about the Levellers and political debates about settlement, such as those at Putney and Whitehall. The regicide as questioning divine right and the great chain of being was also commented on as encouraging the questioning of authority.

Question 03

Most students addressed Charles' role directly and balanced this against other factors, notably the role of ministers such as Clarendon or Danby. Some credited Parliament for some of the successes of the Restoration. Balance was also provided by some students, by explaining the failures of the Restoration monarchy, as in finance, religion and foreign policy. For many Charles' defeat and emergence from the Exclusion Crisis was his greatest personal success. Some students struggled with some explanations, for example the roots and nature of the Clarendon Code. There was also limited engagement with the more conceptual elements of the Restoration Settlement, such as Charles failure and lack of desire to deal with the more fundamental problems of the 'crisis of state'. In this context, some students judged success in different ways, short-term, long-term or by Charles' priority of retaining his throne. As always, whatever their premises, the most successful students constructed a clear argument and supported this throughout their essay to provide a well-substantiated conclusion

Question 04

Although the power of the monarchy undoubtedly changed in the period of the question, the most effective responses were able to question the concept of absolutism or, more specifically, the idea of a 'triumph' by the Political Nation. The most able students showed an excellent engagement with the idea of change and continuity across the years 1681 to 1702, as well as providing nuanced comment on the theory and realities of power in the early modern era.

Most students began with reference to the years 1678 to 1681 when the monarchy, due to the Exclusion Crisis, was weakened. However, most understood that Charles' pragmatic defeat of the process enabled him to emerge as, at least superficially, the most powerful Stuart monarch. Some went on to stress the potential for absolutism in the years 1681 to 1688. Others, however, commented on royal power actually being limited, in real terms, by the Tory Anglican reaction, which was part of Charles' efforts to defeat Exclusion. There was some excellent focused comment on the Glorious Revolution being a mixture of a coup by the Political Nation, and foreign invasion with William bringing 40,000 troops to England. A number of students commented on the strength of monarchy in the years 1685 to 1687 being shown by the reluctance of the Political Nation to act until the trigger of the birth of James' son in June 1688.

The change in the power of the monarchy came predominantly after 1688 and many responses focused more on the years after this -although some reference to the full period of the question was, of course, necessary for the higher marks. The best did so with appropriately selected

context, such as The Bill of Rights, the 1690 Act establishing a Commission of Public Accounts, the 1693 Land Tax, the 1693 establishment of a National Debt, a public loan system whereby the Crown/government's debt were underwritten by Parliament, the establishment in 1694 of the Bank of England to manage National Debt, the 1694 Triennial Act, the 1698 Civil List Act - Parliament voted taxes worth £700,000 pa for the Crown's government costs - and the 1701 Act of Settlement. Again, it was the selection of relevant evidence in support of comment, rather than the amount of detail which enabled students to score highly in considering this period.

Some chose to set change in this period in a broad context, and this was valid, provided the focus remained on the years covered by the question. Those who looked back usually suggested that the concept of monarchy had been fundamentally weakened by the regicide and Interregnum. Such students often emphasised how this strengthened the belief of the Political Nation that monarchy was necessary for order. Students were thus able to relate their wider knowledge to the years 1681 to 1702, arguing that while the Political Nation wanted to assert its influence; it did not seek the collapse of monarchy or personal triumph. A number of students suggested that the post-1688 change was driven by the European priorities of William of Orange, whose focus was on defeating Louis XIV. This encouraged him to work with Parliament; indeed, some even commented on his role as Stadtholder, which shaping his different view of the prerogative and powers of the English monarchy and made him more accepting of the role of Parliament.

The financial revolution was at the heart of many well-argued responses. Students argued that war brought the real change, and the more conceptual were able to argue that this helped to institutionalise the power that the Political Nation had always possessed. In other words, it brought about a greater role for Parliament and created a new financial class. Thus, some very able students were able to argue that the real revolution was not so much in the political changes of 1688-89 but in the growth of the 'fiscal-military state' in Britain. Because of war William worked with parliament to secure finance and also developed an efficient and larger administration. Both of these inter-linked developments saw the emergence of something more closely recognisable as a modern state. So, rather than a triumph of the Political Nation or the defeat of absolutism, the most able students were able to talk about an alliance of interests between Crown and Parliament/Political Nation emerging after 1688. From this some argued that the monarchy also became stronger, as William III emerged as the head of a more powerful 'fiscal-military' state.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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