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# A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/1G: Challenge and transformation: Britain, c1851–1964  
Report on the Examination

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## **Section A**

### **Question 01**

It was pleasing to find that most students had followed previous advice in their approach to the extract question this year. Most avoided unnecessary introductions and comparison between extracts and the most effective responses were able to use selected contextual knowledge to corroborate and/or challenge the main and subsidiary arguments within the extracts. Many students were able to identify the key arguments in the extracts and there were some excellent answers that made reference to grammar schools and social and regional division in the evaluation of Extract A and the introduction of equal pay and changes to the Civil Service and the workforce in their evaluation of extract C. The most able students offered a range of well-selected information to support the evaluation offered, as well as providing balance and explicit judgement in relation to the question. However, it is worth noting that 'balance' does not necessarily mean an equal weighting to what is and what is not convincing within each extract. More able students wrote thoughtfully and meaningfully with regard to each individual extract.

Less able students were less clear as to the arguments the extracts. Less effective responses resorted to a line-by-line paraphrasing of what the extract said. A few students misunderstood Extract A entirely and referred to a rise in a 'middle class outlook'. Some students sought to 'prove' the accuracy of random statements often using knowledge that was considerably outside the scope of the question, such as the tough lives of miners demonstrated by the 1926 General Strike in response to Extract A. Whilst such evidence was acknowledged, more convincing answers benefited from more pertinent, recent examples. Less able students also failed to link their evaluations to the question. It should be noted that the activity is to not test facts within the extract but to evaluate the arguments in relation to the question. Some less effective responses asserted evaluation without contextual support. Less able students also tended to fall back on omission e.g. 'The extract fails to mention' followed by a lengthy list of points. The latter was not credited unless made explicitly relevant. A minority of responses referenced provenance and wasted time writing out the attribution to the extracts. This is not a requirement for component 1 and students would have done better to spend their time reading the extracts so as to extrapolate the arguments they contained.

## **Section B**

### **Question 02**

Many students had an excellent knowledge and understanding of the political reforms that spanned the period including the 1866 bill. There was an awareness of Liberal ideology among many students, and the more effective answers explained how the ideology contributed to a desire to extend the franchise to the working class and address political corruption. These answers went beyond listing reform, retrenchment and peace, to discuss concepts of a 'deserving' working class: those who had demonstrated their respectability through the growth of friendly and building societies for instance. Skilled students were also able to link to other factors, such as the growth of the Reform League, the American Civil War and key individuals within the party and some offered good balance, with comments upon political expediency from both parties and with reference to Disraeli's ideology. Essays were well rewarded if they offered range, analysis and a sustained judgement. Less effective responses often took a chronological approach, describing each of the reforms in turn. Less able students were often unable to say much beyond who passed the reforms and some were muddled about the passage of the 1867 Act, leading to some confused conclusions.

**Question 03**

Some students found this question slightly more challenging. Most students were aware of what the Free Trade policy was, but at the lower end, many responses lacked balance. There were often fair attempts to critique Free Trade but they lacked, or were very thin on, the defence of the policy. Some students introduced too much material that was outside the scope of the question or gave very narrative accounts. Some responses sought to address the existence of an economic depression at length and often lost sight of the focus within the question. Few went beyond 1900. At the top end, the most effective responses were able to acknowledge both sides of the debate and to sustain and justify a judgement of the policy. They assessed the benefits of the policy with reference to various factors including standards of living, industry, agriculture and trade. Exceptional students were able to assess the degree of benefit over time and to compare factors whilst forming a judgement.

**Question 04**

It was clear that many students had enjoyed the study of Ireland and there were some impressive answers to this question. Less successful responses tended to be quite descriptive/narrative. A few answers began by describing the Easter Rising without comparing it to the post-1921 conditions, so missing the point of the question. Such often went to some lengths to describe the treaty and the events shortly after it, but often failed to provide a balanced response on the conditions. Some responses were lacking a range of relevant supporting knowledge, at times drifted into the 1950s and 1960s. Some students wanted to address relationships rather than conditions. This only partially addressed the question. However, more effective answers considered a range of factors when assessing the conditions, including economic, political and social conditions and the level of violence. More able students were able to compare how conditions changed over time and the experiences of both the north and the south. The most able were able to sustain an argument throughout their answer and use selective evidence to support their judgements. Many answers struggled to go to 1939 and, whilst this was taken into account when marking, it was still possible to achieve higher levels if sufficient quality was present in the answer, and the greater part of the period was covered.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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