



GCSE **History**

8145/1B A/B/C/D/E

Report on the Examination

8145
June 2024

Version: 1.0

Further copies of this Report are available from aqa.org.uk

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

1BA: Conflict and tension - First World War, 1894–1918**Question 1**

Students who answered this question were able to pick out specific aspects of the source and link them to the reasons for or the purpose of the Franco-Russian Alliance. Many students knew that Germany was a threat, and some had knowledge of why. Students understood the nature of the Alliance and how it developed. This was awarded at Level 2.

Most students were able to make Level 1 inference or basic comments about how the source was supportive from the many details in the source, commenting on how the leaders looked unified and the militaristic celebrations showing they're ready for war.

Question 2

This question saw the majority of students applying appropriate skills to the two sources in equal measure; students found both sources accessible and were able to make basic assertions if not more. Most students analysed the sources using a combination of content and provenance but with the former more prevalent in higher level answers. As with previous years, Level 3 provenance was often lacking which made it impossible for students to reach Level 4; where it was present it favoured Source C.

Answers at Level 1 were rewarded if they contained a generalised evaluation of provenance and/or a basic understanding of either source. Many students, rewarded at level 2, went beyond identification of features by simply explaining the new tactics of the Ludendorff Offensive or why it failed. Students found it easier to use knowledge linked to Source B than Source C.

Students extended this type of general contextual knowledge with more specific information to earn at least Level 3 marks. This might have been via detailed explanations such as the specific explanation of the new tactics or their consequences, detailed reasons for lack of supplies or the consequences of the offensive. To evaluate the provenance of Source B, students alighted on the experiences of the German officer, but few went further to develop the impact of a post war account with little reason to glorify wartime events. With Source C, students recognised the motive of the source, to mock Germany, and linked this to the date. Some students made the link with this date and British hopes as the Allies entered the final stages of the war.

Question 3

In general, it was clear that students had a good understanding of the impact of the war at sea on the First World War. Most answers revealed an understanding of the blockade, the Battle of Jutland or unrestricted submarine warfare and often linked one feature as a consequence of another. Unfortunately, some students focused on the naval race before 1914 which was not credited.

Level 1 answers tended to display a basic knowledge, sometimes a list, of features of the war at sea but many students went beyond this to reach Level 2 by explaining a simple impact of these benefits such the Lusitania being sunk or losses at Jutland.

Students who were able to address the question's focus on the impact caused by the war at sea successfully advanced to at least Level 3 with developed knowledge of the impact and how it led to change during the war or to the end of the war itself. This was frequently done, for example, by commenting that

Jutland allowed Britain to maintain control of the seas and continue the blockade causing starvation and surrender, or the sinking of the Lusitania stopped unrestricted submarine warfare initially, but it was later reintroduced causing the USA to join and the impact of that.

A number of students linked the war at sea with conflict in the Dardanelles, students often reaching level 2 but no higher as the answers tended to change to a description of Gallipoli which no longer answered the question.

Question 4

Many students were able to deploy some very extensive knowledge relating to both the Schlieffen Plan and other reasons why fighting on the Western Front lasted so long. Answers at level 2 were characterised by a lack of explanation of how potential reasons caused longevity of the conflict. In other words, it was a common weakness of answers that many students tended to settle for claiming that the failure of the Plan led to a war on two fronts or to huge loss of life without going on to say how it caused the war to last so long, even though this actually required little extra development on their part. Some students focused on other theatres of war including the Eastern Front, war at sea and the Dardanelles, unfortunately mostly unsuccessful in linking it to an impact on the Western Front.

Level 1 responses tended to give a description of the Schlieffen Plan or other features of the First World War including descriptions of the trenches or fighting. Level 2 answers would explain the outcomes but often as a narrative including the stated factor plus information about the various generals, the role of the trenches and stalemate, technology and key battles. Many students structured their answers so that they demonstrated a good knowledge of at least one of these potential causes and frequently more. However, it was often the case that students seemed to sacrifice the opportunity for developing a reason for the war lasting so long by trying to cover too many other potential causes superficially and not focusing on the question.

Level 3 responses explained, with evidence, understanding and focus of how different factors caused the war on the Western Front to last so long. It was common to see this done in relation to the Schlieffen Plan preventing a decisive breakthrough leading to warfare in the trenches. Others points which were developed or linked included the decisions of generals, or new technology causing the failure of key battles to achieve any gains or new technology linked to trench warfare which made it impossible to break through the defensive lines. Both causing the war to continue until 1918. Some students chose to explain the developments that broke the stalemate and why it had taken so long to reach the end of the war.

There were some impressive Level 4 answers in which judgements were made using the overlapping nature of many of the potential reasons to show how they contributed to and reinforced each other. Focus on the question was evident throughout the answer and sustained in a conclusion.

With regard to Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar the vast majority of students were awarded 3 marks for the standard of their historical communication, and students were able to communicate their points effectively.

1BB: Conflict and tension - the inter-war years, 1918–1939**Question 1**

This question proved straightforward and accessible. The source allowed students to show their understanding. Students were able to use their knowledge of the Paris Peace Conference and made sensible inferences from the content to show why the source was critical of President Wilson. There was widespread understanding of the image and symbolism in the cartoon. Answers that relied on the source were rewarded at Level 1. Answers that drew on contextual knowledge of the figures and the varied aims of the Big Three at the Paris Peace Conference were able to access Level 2. Few students made use of the provenance which is another route to Level 2. Effective use of the source's provenance was seen in answers that were able to explain how the cartoon reflected the views of those in America who believed Wilson was too idealistic for thinking that 'everlasting peace' could be achieved. Some students were able to give a context for the cartoon by referring to Wilson's Fourteen Points.

Question 2

This question saw the majority of students coping well with the demands of two sources and demonstrated sound and appropriate source evaluation skills. All students attempted an evaluation of the sources using content but far fewer attempted to evaluate the provenance. Most students were able to explain ways in which the sources had value in relation to the enquiry point. It was pleasing to note that instances of answers that based their evaluations on source limitations or omissions, were extremely rare.

At Level 1 credit was awarded for basic understanding of either source. Students writing at this level found Source B far more accessible than C and were able to achieve marks by simple references to the message of the cartoon. There were some weaker answers which were characterised by a description of the content of both sources or unfocused and confused factual knowledge about the League of Nations.

Students' answers at Level 2 included more contextual knowledge about the creation of the League of Nations. Level 2 answers discussed the implications of the USA not being a member of the League of Nations and the League's response to events in Manchuria in 1931. However, it was common at Level 2 to see students copying out parts of Source C which restricted the value of the response.

When answers reached Level 3 it was usually because they included an evaluation of both sources and made explicit reference to utility. Detailed knowledge of the structure of the League as well as the Manchurian Crisis was used to contextualise both sources and draw a conclusion about their utility. The best answers took note of the date of publication and identified the critical message of Source B. Students used developed knowledge to contextualise the cartoon and explain that the prediction of future problems turned out to be accurate. This often included details from the Abyssinian Crisis surrounding the issue of the USA being able to trade with an aggressor and thus undermine sanctions imposed by the League of Nations.

Students at this level used Source C to give developed explanation of the limited power of the League to resolve conflict or hold aggressive countries to account. There was secure knowledge of the chronology and events of the Manchurian Crisis and a clear focus on utility based on source content. The provenance was not widely used for developed evaluation of the source's utility. Students could have made use of the date of the source and the details given in the attribution to analyse how the source could be useful to an historian. An argument could be made that Source C reveals the negative attitudes towards the League of Nations from within a country that was a permanent member of the Council.

In Level 4 answers there was evidence of complex level thinking that considered the motives behind the publication of sources. There were also some answers that identified a relationship between the dates of the sources. Good use of the provenance occurred when students observed that Source B showed doubts about the effectiveness of the League at the time of its creation in 1919. Source C shows that these doubts were still present in 1931, thereby offering an historian a long-term perspective on British perceptions of the League.

Question 3

This question was done well by the majority of students. There was widespread evidence of good knowledge and understanding about Anschluss. Most students were able to present a structured account of events in Austria during 1938 however a large proportion of answers had a misdirected focus on the events of 1934 and the Dollfuss Affair.

Level 1 answers gave basic statements that were relevant to the question whereas Level 2 responses had more specific references to the timeline of events relating to Anschluss between Germany and Austria.

Students who proceeded to the higher levels did so by addressing the specific requirements of the question and presenting a developed analysis of consequences for international relations. They tended to focus on an understanding of the second order concepts (AO2:4) to explain the affects of Anschluss with specific regard to how it emboldened Hitler. Strong answers also argued that Anschluss led Hitler to continue with his expansionist foreign policy aims; another effect on international relations was Chamberlain's policy of appeasement and in the longer term, the Nazi-Soviet Pact. When answers were able to explain the role of Anschluss in the wider context of causes of the Second World War, and maintain an explicit focus on the question, they were rewarded at Level 3.

To access Level 4 students must give two explicitly explained points. Better technique and clearer organisation of their knowledge would have helped some students achieve higher marks.

Question 4

Very good knowledge was displayed in the answers to this question and students were quick to address the stated factor and offer alternatives factors as counter arguments. The extent to which students developed their comments on any given factor determined whether or not their answer was rewarded beyond Level 2. A common weakness when students had insecure knowledge about the stated factor and the Treaty of Versailles, was to try to make an argument based entirely on the economy of Weimar Germany and the impact of the Wall Street Crash in 1929 as a reason for hatred.

Level 1 responses tended to be limited to a general identification of some of the military terms that were imposed on Germany. Level 2 answers included more specific relevant knowledge of details such as the ban on conscription or the numbers of military personal and equipment Germany was permitted to have. Most students could identify at least one other factor such as the War Guilt Clause or reparations and explain how they were also reasons why Germans hated the Treaty of Versailles.

At Level 3 developed answers were characterised by a clearer structure and they directly addressed the question with good explanations of why the different terms of the Treaty were hated.

The strongest answers at this level were effective because there was a clear line of argument covering a range of factors including the military, territorial, colonial and economic terms of the Treaty. There was strong awareness of the perceived injustice of the Diktat and the inconsistent application of the principle of self-determination to the Empires of the European powers.

It was clear to examiners that for an answer to be secure in Level 3 it must be supported with specific factual detail. However, some good two-sided answers remained in Level 3 because rather than making a complex judgement, they simply gave a summary conclusion.

Students reached Level 4 by demonstrating complex thinking. This could be shown, for example, by giving a relational judgement on the factors discussed in the essay. In this question there were many examples of this as students were able to compare the impact of the different terms and explain Germany's hatred of the Treaty of Versailles. Some students offered a hierarchy of judgement with substantiated reasoning based on the extent to which Germany could recover from different terms. For example, while the army could be expanded at a future date, the shame of the war guilt clause could never be erased. Similarly, some students argued that the impact of what was done to Germany's armed forces was limited to military personnel only, whereas the impact of reparations and the ensuing hyperinflation affected every member of society. Students are encouraged to present substantiated discussion in their answers and reasoned judgement in their conclusions.

With regard to Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar the vast majority of students were awarded 3 marks for the standard of their historical communication.

1BC: Conflict and tension between East and West, 1945–1972**Question 1**

This question was very accessible to students and most used supporting knowledge about the Bay of Pigs to explain why Source A was critical of the USA. At level 1, students identified relevant aspects of the source such as the nature of the volunteers that America was recruiting or the appearance of the USA to be hiding something, ‘being shady’. Many answers drew on contextual knowledge about the Bay of Pigs to support their answers and were awarded in Level 2. For example, Cuban exiles being recruited and let down by the USA or the role of the CIA in the preparation for the Bay of Pigs, or why the USA wanted to keep their involvement secret. A minority of students linked the source to a wider criticism of ‘Dollar Imperialism’. A small number of students attempted to evaluate the provenance. This was done less successfully, with many failing to go beyond basic and asserted comments about bias.

Some students wrote at length about Cuba and the Bay of Pigs but did not relate their knowledges to features of the source. A minority of students were confused about the chronology of events in Cuba and assumed that missiles were already in place.

Question 2

This question was tackled well by the majority of students who were evidently very confident in their knowledge of the beginning of the Cold War and demonstrated sound and appropriate source evaluation skills. Students found plenty to discuss about sources B and C as there were many aspects upon which the students could base their answers. Overall, students tended to develop their analysis of the content of the sources with only a small minority evaluating provenance beyond level 2. Where this was achieved, it was usually focused on Source B.

At level 1, students were awarded for identifying aspects of the sources which were relevant to the beginning of the Cold War and based their answers on re-wording or describing the two sources. Students found both sources accessible.

Those who linked relevant knowledge to the sources moved into Level 2, for example in the case of Source B the naming of the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, containment policy etc. For Source C students tended to name Dollar Imperialism, NATO, the arms race etc. and also pointed out the hypocrisy of US policy without explanation.

Level 3 was mostly achieved through the students evaluating the content of the sources. Large numbers of students developed their explanations by showing detailed understanding of the events and developments suggested by the sources, for example the money associated with Marshall Aid and the impact on Soviet attitudes and policy. For Source C, many students based their answers on US secrecy about the Manhattan Project and subsequent tensions at Potsdam. Others discussed the increasing US threat to the Soviet Sphere of Influence related to the forming of NATO. Another successful point of evaluation of C was perceived Dollar Imperialism of US policies in Europe.

Developed evaluation of provenance was rare to see. The most successful responses had a sharp focus on purpose and audience explaining, for example, that Truman hoped to influence future US government policy by continuing containment after his term ended. Evaluation of the provenance of C was less successful with most students making generalised points about propaganda.

The most effective responses discussed the motives for portraying US policies as aggressive and a direct threat to Soviet security, exaggerating the number of US bases as a means to instil fear in the population.

Question 3

This question was tackled well by most students and the majority achieved at least Level 2 by using relevant knowledge about the Prague Spring reforms and the consequences.

Students who made basic statements about reforms leading to attacks by the USSR or identification of Dubcek were awarded Level 1. Large numbers of students had impressive knowledge about the events of the Prague Spring and completed very long descriptions of the events. Such answers were limited to level 2 because they did not address the ‘tail’ of the question; how the events affected the Cold War. Students who named the Brezhnev Doctrine or stated that the USA did nothing to support the reforms remained in Level 2.

Explaining the impact on the Cold War was central to progress into level 3 and 4. The most popular choices included how the Brezhnev Doctrine led to strengthening Soviet control of eastern Europe, how the absence of US intervention confirmed that they would not intervene in issues behind the Iron Curtain or how the response of China to the Brezhnev Doctrine led to the Sino-Soviet split and Détente. Students needed to explicitly explain two ways the Cold War was affected to access Level 4.

There were many responses which confused the events in Czechoslovakia with those in Hungary in 1956, most notably attempting to leave the Warsaw Pact.

Question 4

This question was answered very well by most students, and the vast majority were aware how to structure their writing, offering an explanation of events in Korea with one or more alternative reasons as a counter argument.

Students awarded in Level 1 demonstrated basic knowledge of events such as offering an outline description of the opposing sides in the Korean War and naming other events in the 1950s such as the crisis over Hungary. Alternatively, some students offered detailed evaluations of events in Vietnam or the arms race but were almost entirely outside the 1950s.

Level 2 responses often contained excellent knowledge of events in the 1950s but did not develop into explanations about the effect on the Cold War, relying on descriptions of events. Alternatively, a minority explained events in Korea only. Less common but also awarded in Level 2, were responses which explained the impact on the Cold War of a range of events in the 1950s but lacked factual knowledge of the events themselves.

The majority of students who were awarded Level 3 developed paragraphs on Korea which explained the USA’s fears of Communism expanding into Asia confirming fears of a Domino Effect leading to the first proxy war etc. Hungary was usually explained in terms of reasserting Soviet control over eastern Europe in spite of Destalinisation and showing the unwillingness of the West to actively engage in conflicts behind the Iron Curtain. China becoming Communist and the impact of the Treaty of Friendship were also a popular choice amongst students as a development of the Cold War. Some students successfully explained the Space Race and Arms Race as developing the Cold War in terms of increasing paranoia and fears which impacted other decision making, (however more commonly students gave a simple list of events and

inventions). Some students discussed NATO and the Warsaw Pact as a development (although few went beyond simple comments about two clear sides), the best of which linked these developments to other crises such as events in Hungary.

There were many students who wrote about events outside the 1950s by considering topics such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, Berlin Blockade and Airlift. A significant number tried to use Vietnam as an alternative view but often veered into the 60s and presented little knowledge of US support for Diem in the 1950s.

Students reaching Level 4 demonstrated complex thinking by way of a substantiated judgment. This could be accomplished in the main body of the writing or, more commonly in a well-argued conclusion. Effective judgments included a discussion of the scope and influence of different events such as the localised events in Korea as opposed to the global and long-term impact of the Arms Race. Others discussed the consequential impacts of events such as the Treaty of Friendship leading to proxy wars in Asia, for example. With regard to Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar the vast majority of students were awarded 3 marks for the standard of their historical communication.

1BD: Conflict and tension in Asia, 1950–1975**Question 1**

The vast majority of students found this question accessible and were able to use their knowledge of the Vietnam War to make inferences from the poster's content to show why the source supported the fall of Saigon. Answers that relied on simple analysis of the source were rewarded at Level 1. There were frequent references on the facial expressions and stance of the two women in the centre of the source and many linked these comments to suggest feelings of happiness and joy that North and South Vietnam had been united. Many also commented on the large crowds and the symbolism in the poster, though not all were able to support their analysis with contextual knowledge of the final stages of the Vietnam War. A minority thought that the source was linked to the Tet Offensive.

Answers that drew on specific contextual knowledge about the North Vietnamese capture of Saigon and its subsequent renaming to Ho Chi Minh City were able to access Level 2. Some answers at Level 2 also explained the significance of the date in the top right of the poster.

Question 2

This question saw the majority of students coping well with the demands of two sources, applying sound and appropriate source evaluation skills. All attempted an evaluation of the sources with a focus on their content but far fewer attempted to evaluate the provenance. Most students were able to explain ways in which the sources had value in relation to the enquiry point. Whilst the question permits students to discuss the limitations of the sources, those limitations have to be relevant to the question. It is always better to advise students to explore the positive contribution that a source could make to an understanding of the specific focus of the question.

At Level 1 credit was awarded for basic understanding of either source. Answers recognised basic features of the sources, such as Nixon ordering the bombing of Cambodia, that Vietnamisation had worked, and the USA had offered help to South Vietnam to defend itself from the North's invasion. Some thought Source B referred to American bombing campaigns in Vietnam, such as Operation Rolling Thunder.

Students' answers at Level 2 included more contextual knowledge about the reasons for Nixon's policy of Vietnamisation. Level 2 answers discussed how the bombing of Cambodia was an attempt to destroy the Ho Chi Min Trail and the Vietcong bases there and how the USA aimed to train the ARVN so they could carry on the war without the help of US troops. There were some students at Level 2 who largely paraphrased Source C, which restricted the value of the response. Many commented on the mocking and/or critical nature of Source B, though few offered a comment on the provenance of Source C. It was rare to see a response which focused on the different timing of both sources and how this could contribute to utility.

When answers reached Level 3 it was usually because they included an evaluation of the content of both sources, maintained an explicit focus on utility of the sources and linked their observations to Vietnamisation rather than the Vietnam War as a whole. Developed understanding of the content of Source B involved discussions as to why the bombing of Cambodia was a key element of Vietnamisation. It was explained that Nixon knew the US could not simply withdraw from Vietnam and that the training of the ARVN would take time. There were many answers that displayed good knowledge of Nixon's campaign slogans of 1968, with promises of an 'honourable peace' and a 'secret plan' to end the fighting. Other responses developed the content of Source C with detailed knowledge of the help given to South Vietnam, noting the additional 150,000 US troops which were sent. Explicit evidence was given to explain why

Vietnamisation had not ‘worked’, when Source C had claimed that it had. Some were able to give a developed evaluation of Source B’s provenance. Explanations addressed how the critical nature of the source, illustrated the growth of opposition and protest against US involvement in a costly and destructive war, with various examples given of relevant protests.

Question 3

This question was done well by the majority of students. There was widespread evidence of good knowledge and understanding of the events which followed North Korea’s invasion. Not all students focused sufficiently on the demands of the question, as they gave detailed accounts of the course of the war without explaining why the invasion led to international conflict.

Level 1 answers noted the North had invaded the South and showed some awareness that other countries were involved. Most students were able to access level 2 with simple knowledge or through a narrative response which lacked the required explanation to access level 3. In many cases, despite the lack of development, there was an impressive array of knowledge on the early successes of the North Korean army and how these were reversed following the intervention of UN forces. Some students chose to focus on why the war turned into a stalemate.

Students who proceeded to the higher levels did so by addressing the specific requirements of the question and presenting a developed analysis of consequences which led to international conflict. They tended to focus on an understanding of the second order concepts (AO2) to explain why North Korea’s invasion of the South threatened America’s containment policy, which led to UN intervention and international conflict. Strong answers also argued how MacArthur’s continued push towards the Chinese border and his misreading of China’s intentions caused China to enter the war, thus leading to international tension.

To access Level 4 students must give two explicitly explained points. There were a number of ways this could have been achieved in this question, for example, explanations linked to more than one of the different countries involved. Clearer organisation of their knowledge and better technique would have helped some students achieve higher marks.

Question 4

Very good knowledge was displayed in the answers to this question and students were quick to address the stated factor and then offer alternative factors. The extent to which students developed their explanations on any given factor determined whether or not their answer was rewarded beyond Level 2.

Level 1 responses tended to be limited to a general identification of some of the factors which led to North Vietnam’s success in the war. Level 2 answers included more specific relevant knowledge about the Vietcong’s guerilla warfare tactics such as punji traps and ‘bouncing betties’. There was detailed knowledge about the use of tunnel systems and the value to the North Vietnamese of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Many were aware of how tactics were changed during the Tet Offensive, as well as the importance of peasant support for the Vietcong. Not all students were able to explain why these tactics led to North Vietnam’s success in the Vietnam War.

At Level 3 developed answers were characterised by a clear structure which directly addressed the question with good explanations of why North Vietnam succeeded, and the US failed. These explanations usually concentrated on how Vietcong tactics lowered the morale and fighting effectiveness of American

troops. A range of other factors were considered, with a particular emphasis on how ineffective US tactics and the way the draft was conducted were seen as important contributory factors for US failure to defeat the North Vietnamese. The impact of the terrain and US failure to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of the Vietnamese peasants were also explored. The strongest answers at this level were effective because there was a clear line of argument that explained how factors led to North Vietnamese success and this was supported with specific factual knowledge. However, some good two-sided answers remained in Level 3 because they failed to make any judgement or simply gave a summary conclusion.

Students reached Level 4 by demonstrating complex thinking. In this question there were examples of this as students were able to explain the relative significance of the different factors. For example, students sometimes concluded in their judgements that the tactics of the Vietcong were not the most important factor as failures in US strategy and weaponry had more impact, whilst recognising the contribution which these Vietcong tactics had because they wore down the enemy and prevented American forces from securing a victory. Furthermore, some answers judged that the physical environment contributed more to North Vietnam’s success. The dense jungle aided the effectiveness of guerilla warfare and gave the Americans an immediate disadvantage because their technology and military hardware were not suited to the terrain in which they were fighting.

With regard to Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar the vast majority of students were awarded 3 marks for the standard of their historical communication.

1BE: Conflict and tension in the Gulf and Afghanistan, 1990–2009**Question 1**

This question was based on a very accessible source relating to the USA’s action in Afghanistan. It was clear and students were able to relate to the image of the US helicopter teetering on the top of an Afghan mountain.

Statistically, this was one of the best attempted questions on the paper with only less than 5% of students not attempting it.

For Level 1, students were able to connect basic inferences such as “the US were struggling” or “they are losing their grip of Afghanistan”. Students might also have connected the content to general knowledge such as the US Army’s struggle to deal with the terrain or generic comments about guerrilla warfare.

For Level 2, students provided specific contextual knowledge regarding US problems in Afghanistan including the strength of the Taliban insurgency and the weakness of the Karzai government. Stronger students connected the date of the cartoon (11th September 2009), which was 8 years after September 11th and that the US were still in Afghanistan with little progress. Alternatively, they mentioned that President Obama had committed to a troop surge in 2009. More able students also observed that the cartoon reflected the view of the US public about the war, rather than what the US government or army were claiming.

It is worth noting that students must connect observations to the content of the source.

Question 2

This question produced a wide spread of responses, ranging from the impressively knowledgeable to students who were only able to make basic inferences.

For Level 1, students relied on details from the two sources and making inferences from them. Some students resorted to copying large volumes of text in Source B, which limited their marks. For higher level 1, students must deal with both sources.

For Level 2 provenance, students needed to discuss the provenance of the sources on a general level. Source C was the most attempted, discussing the notion of propaganda on a basic level, whereas for Level 3, they would need to acknowledge the duplicity of Hussain’s message, when many Iraqis held a different view. For Level 2 provenance on Source B, students could have made observations about the US attitude towards Iraq shifting during the late 80s and early 90s. For Level 3, students needed to identify that both the Israelis and the Americans viewed Hussain as a threat and were trying to warn about this.

The difference between Level 2 and Level 3 knowledge is the degree of specifics given within a student’s explanation. There was a wide range of arguments with students commenting on the costs of the war, details of the brutality of the war, religious divisions between Iraq and Iran, the issue of no decisive winner from the war, connections to Iraq’s later invasion of Kuwait, and international revulsion at the use of chemical weapons against the Kurds.

Where a student linked content to knowledge at level 3 on both sources and level 3 provenance on one source, they entered Level 4.

Question 3

This question was the least attempted question on this topic. The question was very fair and provided many routes through the levels, however, about 20% of students did not attempt this question. Furthermore, a further 20% of students recorded zero marks. This was not due to a lack of knowledge for all students, although some did not answer the question and focused on why the 2003 Invasion of Iraq happened rather than why the invasion developed into focused opposition.

For Level 2, students provided a narrative of the invasion. To reach Level 3, students needed to identify a way in which opposition developed. This could be linking to the war crimes at Abu Ghraib, damage to infrastructure and the long-term impact on the quality of life for Iraqis. Nouri al-Maliki's government's unpopularity and the development of the Sunni/Shia civil war connected to Muqtada al-Sadr and the Mahdi Army. Finally, many able students pointed to the wider implications internationally, with protests and terrorist attacks such as the 7/7 bombings.

For Level 4, students needed to develop two routes in specific detail and explain the impact of these events.

Question 4

The question allowed for multiple routes to discussion of the motivations of Al-Qaeda. Students demonstrated a range of knowledge. Level 1 and Level 2 often included multiple routes for answers but lacked detail, development or understanding.

The main routes were firstly, Al-Qaeda's hostility towards the US in the form of aggressive action featuring attacks on the USS Cole, the earlier 1993 attack on the World Trade Centre, attacks on African embassies and of course 9/11. Secondly, Al-Qaeda's disapproval of what they saw as "US immorality" and their objection to US positioning following the Gulf War near the holy sites of Medina and Mecca. Thirdly, the view held by Al-Qaeda that the US had actively supported Israel in setting up the Israeli state, and the Nakba. The continued oppression of the Palestinians was a frequent reference from Al-Qaeda. Fourthly, the desire to create their own Islamic state uniting Muslims under Sharia law. Fifthly, Al-Qaeda post-9/11 and their dealings within Afghanistan. Finally, the creation of Al-Qaeda within the backdrop of the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets and the Mujahedeen. The latter was mostly seen from the most able students.

Students wanting to reach higher levels need to ensure that they are providing sufficient historical detail but also attempt to deal with the question. Often, students were kept in Level 2 because they weren't explaining why the issues which they presented were greater or lesser motivations to Al-Qaeda.

For Level 3, there must be development of a factor and a clear attempt to explain the knowledge in relation to the question. To move into Level 4, examiners are looking for at least three different, developed arguments and a reasoned judgement. Students often rush to a conclusion but do not weigh up the relative position of their different arguments. The conclusion often picks a factor and then repeats some of the previous arguments, rather than relating the factors together in order of severity or priority. This often limits students' marks.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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