



A-level
History

7042/2P

Report on the Examination

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Question 1

This question presented students with three sources relating to the Great Leap Forward and asked them to assess the value of the sources for a historian studying these events. The strongest students were able to use their knowledge of the historical context to demonstrate how the sources revealed different perspectives and understandings of the Great Leap Forward. Source A focused on the lived experience of an agricultural expert who experienced the Great Leap Forward living in a commune; Source B came from a speech given by Chairman Mao to Party cadres; and Source C came from a CCP appointed headmaster and documented the official explanations given to the Chinese population for the failure of the Great Leap Forward. The strongest students were also able to read the tone of the sources correctly to show how the author's attitude and intentions affected the value of the sources. Those students who did both of these well, alongside detailed supporting knowledge, scored highly.

The most common features of weaker student answers were a lack of supporting own knowledge and an over-reliance on vague statements which functioned as a commentary on the content of the sources. Some also struggled to focus their responses to the demands of the question and instead provided narratives of the events of the Great Leap Forward, and, in some instances, 1960s geopolitics more generally. Some students also struggled to infer the tone of both Sources B and C, with some accepting Mao's overly optimistic assessment of the Great Leap Forward without challenge; and in Source C, concentrating on the Sino-Soviet split rather than assessing the value of the source as a piece of propaganda to the Great Leap Forward. Students must ensure they have a strong awareness of the different phases of the Great Leap Forward in order to aid understanding.

Question 2

This question asked students to evaluate Jiang Jieshi's success in carrying out the GMD's three principles of Nationalism, Democracy, and the People's Livelihood prior to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war. There were some very good answers which offered a detailed and balanced analysis of Jiang's approach to the Three Principles. Many students were able to form a judgement relating to the question and this led to a number of strong one-sided arguments. It is essential for students to consider success, however limited, as well as failures. There were various degrees of knowledge demonstrated with some only having a very loose awareness and understanding of the GMD's principles of Nationalism, Democracy, and the People's Livelihood. The very best answers included specific detail on a range of successes and failures and then drew lucid and convincing conclusions. The most common feature of weaker answers was a lack of understanding and knowledge.

Question 3

This question asked students to evaluate the extent to which conflict over Xinjiang caused deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations in the years 1962-1966. The strongest answers were arranged thematically, with students analysing the importance of conflict over Xinjiang and relating this to other regional and global factors that caused deterioration in relations. As always, detailed knowledge and high conceptual understanding were key. The weaker answers demonstrated limited knowledge of the conflict in Xinjiang but some awareness of other factors that caused the Sino-Soviet split. Some students attempted to rework the content of Source C to support their arguments, this was not credited as the Great Leap Forward had been abandoned by 1962. Students who had good knowledge of Xinjiang and were able to demonstrate strong contextual knowledge of ongoing tensions over the area prior to 1962 were credited.

Question 4

This question asked students to consider whether the Shanghai Radicals were the most powerful group in China between the years 1969-1976. The best answers had a clear grasp of power relations in the period and assessed the fluctuating power of the Shanghai Radicals over the whole of timeframe. These answers analysed the power of the Shanghai Radicals alongside the influence of other groups such as the Zhou Enlai and the moderates and Bin Liao and the PLA. Weaker answers focused on one of these groups or attempted to argue that the Red Guards, disbanded before the timeframe were the most powerful. Students clearly knew a lot about Shanghai Radicals and their power in China but tended to describe rather than actually answer the question, leading to one-sided answers and low marks. Some students also misread the question and attempted to argue that Mao was the most powerful 'group', these arguments were not credited. However, students who argued that Mao's influence often dictated the most powerful groups across the years in question received good marks.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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