



A-level  
**History**

7042/2G

Report on the Examination

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## Question 01

The average mark was similar to the average for 01 in previous years. The students found the sources accessible and the majority were able to provide some range and depth of contextual knowledge about the issues of slavery to support the sources, however at the lower end, they did not have a very precise understanding of the issues around slavery in relation to the content of the sources. As a result, quite a lot of the supporting contextual knowledge deployed by students was generalised in nature, limiting marks to Level 3 or below. As in previous years, the two main pitfalls into which several students fell were, firstly, to assess the provenance of the sources entirely separately from the content, thereby limiting assessment of provenance to generic and rather superficial comments. Secondly, many students again adopted a ‘line-by-line’ approach to assessing the sources, which caused them to overlook the main argument of the sources in relation to the question. However, stronger responses demonstrated an effective understanding of the provenance, content and tone of the sources in direct relation to the issue raised in the question. Answers in these higher levels also achieved some balance and judgement. To access Level 5, it is important for very able students to provide some substantiated judgement about the value of each source.

## Source A

In relation to the provenance of the source, Level 3 responses tended to point out that the slave owner’s livelihood relied on slavery and therefore, would have had good reason to oppose any attempt to abolish slavery. In balance, Level 3 answers often highlighted that the southern population was 90 percent slaves therefore the slave owners may be ‘biased’ in their views towards slavery, however these Level 3 answers did not develop this point further in relation to the content of the source. A less convincing point made by average to weaker students was that the south was religious, however any supporting evidence to analyse this point was limited.

Stronger responses in relation to the provenance of the source were able to link points about provenance to the content. For example, in identifying in detail the extent the southern economy relied on slavery and how this significantly contributed to the American economy, more able students often argued that any measure to abolish slavery was not practicable, and had been delayed until 1808, supporting the impact the loss of southern revenue would have had on the American economy. Stronger answers also pointed out that many slaves had been freed during the war, and this had not led to ‘poverty, distress and ruin to the freed slaves’ as suggested in the source, thereby lending greater credibility to the argument and judgement on value.

The ‘line-by-line’ approach was adopted by some students which often resulted in a mark in Level 2 – for instance, some students latched onto the phrase, ‘our property, our slaves,’ and launched into an assessment of the morality of slavery and the reasons why slavery was wrong. However, this content and assessment were not relevant to the question. Similarly, some students read the sentence on ‘Scripture’ and ‘God permitted slavery’ and then provided contextual evidence about the different religions in the colonies. Again, this assessment was not relevant to the question. It is important for students to read the precise focus of the question and the whole content/argument of the source, before starting their assessment.

Stronger responses did provide more relevant and precise supporting context. There were references to the liberalisation of the manumission laws in support of the main argument of the source about the attempt to stop slavery. Several more able students also pointed out that, some colonists were motivated by revolutionary ideology, and took advantage of these laws to free slaves.

## Source B

This proved to be the most challenging source for the majority of students. Many average and weaker students misunderstood the content of the source. Unfortunately, for many students who had provided a reasonable assessment of Sources A and C, this misunderstanding of Source B limited their mark to top Level 2 or bottom of Level 3. A key differentiator in relation to this source was the precision of students' contextual knowledge in relation to the weakness of the Articles of Confederation and demands for a stronger national government. In Level 3, contextual support was often limited to general points about the failure of the Articles of Confederation. In addition, further generalised context was provided in relation to the nature of New York as an anti-slavery state. Stronger responses – in Levels 4 and 5 – were able to provide more precise context often providing details about the disharmony such as the division between the North and the South.

Average and weaker students found it hard to achieve balance in relation to the content of the source. However, stronger responses did evaluate the claims towards the end of the source that 'disagreements about slavery' was an 'obstacle to the future of America'. These better answers were able to provide some contextual knowledge of the divisions in American, and develop their argument with contextual knowledge and understanding around ratification and the debates over the new Federal Constitution such as the Great Compromise.

In relation to the provenance of the source, most students made use of the date, author, purpose and audience of the source to provide some balanced assessment. In Level 3, comments of this nature tended to be brief and undeveloped, whereas in Levels 4 and 5 the assessment of provenance was developed effectively, often taking into consideration the content of the source at the same time.

## Source C

In relation to the provenance of the source, Level 3 responses tended to point out that Hamilton was a Federalist and therefore he would want a strong national government. In balance, Level 3 answers often pointed out that due to his political position, the source may be 'biased' against the Southern states, however these Level 3 answers did not develop this point further in relation to the content of the source. A less convincing point made by average to weaker students was that, as Hamilton was a member of Congress, his speech was 'biased', therefore limiting his value.

An issue that arose in relation to the provenance of the source was the reference that Hamilton was Secretary to the Treasury, and some students sometimes questioned the value of the source based on Hamilton's financial programme which was not relevant to the source. Alternatively, other students drifted into a broader assessment of Hamilton's views about slavery, providing generic evidence that he was against slavery. Ineffective attempts to analyse this aspect were, therefore, simply ignored. Students were more comfortable assessing the content and tone of the source and the vast majority were familiar with the three-fifths compromise and understood the nature and purpose of the compromise. The more developed assessments suggested that the compromise was important for healing the divisions between the North and the South, which was used to assess the value of the source.

Stronger responses did recognise that the source was about the three-fifths compromise and the debate to heal the divisions between the North and the South over the issues slavery. More able students were able to provide some supporting contextual knowledge in relation to the debate over representation and taxation, such as the Northern states wanted slaves excluded from representation, since they were neither

citizens nor voters, but included for tax purposes since they were a form of property. A few very able students were able to question how far this compromise was a benefit to the United States and whether it was more of a continuation of the institution of slavery, citing that the issue of slavery was postponed until 1808.

## Question 2

This was a popular question, with many students choosing to answer this question. The most common approach was to balance the crisis in Boston in 1770 as a result British policies and the reactions of the colonies in relation to these policies. Stronger responses demonstrated a good range and depth of contextual knowledge and drew effective analytical links between the different factors. For example, some students made analytical links between the impact of British policies in building animosity towards the British. A common analysis made in stronger responses was that the crisis was an accumulation of tension in the years 1765 to 1770 that had gained momentum resulting in the crisis in 1770 and both the British and the colonists were instrumental in escalating the tension.

Level 3 answers often covered a similar range of factors but lacked some depth and precision to supporting factual information. For example, some Level 3 answers wrote about the importance of the Stamp Act, but did not mention any further contributions about why it was important. Other responses were limited to Level 3 due to some imbalance, or imprecision of factual knowledge, eg around the specific events of the Stamp Act crisis, the Townshend duties or Boston massacre. In particular, several students in Level 3 provided rather general details about some of the events during 1765 to 1770, with some explanation but in a rather generalised context lacking specific focus to the question.

In Levels 1 and 2, it was rather disappointing to come across a number of responses that were confused between the Townsend duties and the Coercive Acts. It is obviously imperative for an effective understanding of the course for students to be able to distinguish between the events up to 1770, and those after 1770.

## Question 3

This was the least popular of the essay questions. It was also a question which generated the widest spread of marks. Those stronger students, who knew the topic well, were able to provide a good range and depth of supporting contextual knowledge about Jefferson and his influence in the colonial move towards independence. Such students were also able to engage analytically with the question and assess the extent to which Jefferson was influential in this period. Almost all students rejected the proposition that Jefferson was the most important reason for the move towards independence in these years, however there was a range of interesting evaluative judgements as to the nature and extent of the influence of Jefferson. Students achieving Level 3 demonstrated an understanding of the question but the supporting contextual knowledge they provided lacked depth and detail.

There were some answers in Levels 1 and 2 for this question. Some students clearly did not have sufficient knowledge of the topic to construct an effective response. Some answers were limited to basic facts about Jefferson, for instance his drafting the Declaration of Independence and little else. Others provided a lot of factual content on a range of factors that influenced independence such as Thomas Paine's Common Sense, which was not well linked to the question.

**Question 4**

This essay question, similar to question 2, was a popular essay question and resulted in a range of approaches in response. All relevant approaches were credited. For example, some students focused on the extent of French intervention, citing the support and assistance having a positive impact on the war and American victory. Other students focused on the extent to which French intervention was minimal but that it diverted British attention away from fighting the Americans rather than actual support provided by the French. Many students included a paragraph on the role of French intervention. However, the depth and detail offered was by some students limited. Although, in the majority of cases, a range of other factors was analysed which showed good knowledge and understanding of the topic and a supported the argument presented. Answers that lacked depth, or balance were rewarded on the merit of the answer overall.

As usual, the range and depth of supporting contextual knowledge was the key differentiator between the levels of response. However, to access Levels 4 and 5, it was important for students to introduce an element of balance into the essay. Most students achieved this by comparing the role of French intervention to assess how much the victory was attributed to the French with other factors. For example, several students argued that French intervention was significant in bolstering the Continental army, diverting British troops away from the colonies, and increasing the scale of the war. Weaker responses tended to be rather descriptive in nature and often drifted away from the focus of the question. For example, providing comments on the reasons for victory such as the role of Washington's leadership, British mistakes and French intervention was credited, these answers were often descriptive, and the detail was generalised. Likewise, it was possible to include points about Washington in a relevant way, but narrative accounts of his actions that were not effectively focused on the question were not credited.

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

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