



A Level History

7042/2S The Making of Modern Britain, 1951-2007

Report on the examination

Published: August 2024

Contents

The below table is interactive. You can press the control button click on the title of the question to go directly to that page.

Contents	Page
General guidance about question types	3
Individual questions and exemplification	5
Further support	17

General guidance on question types

Question 1: The 'Source' Question

- An assessment of the value (and limitations, where appropriate) of each source in relation to the question set.
- Students should address the content and provenance of sources and use their own knowledge to support their evaluation. Where relevant, students could also consider the emphasis and tone of a source in their assessment of the value in relation to the question set.

Qualities seen in more successful responses

- A clear judgement is made about the value of the sources in relation to the question set.
- Answers move beyond a balanced description and provide an argument driven by the student's judgement overall about a source's value in relation to the question set.
- Comments on tone, when used, focus on the value of the source to an historian studying the given issue in the question.
- The content and provenance of the sources is understood, and relevant and accurate knowledge is used to assess value in relation to the question set.
- There is roughly equal treatment of all three sources.

Qualities seen in less successful responses

- Follows a very rigid structure and/or relies heavily on pre-learned phrases, which convey a sense that answers have not understood the sources set.
- Confusion over terminology and exactly what makes a source valuable. Words such as 'bias' are often used without being able to explain how this links to a judgement on value. Bias may well be the reason that a source is valuable.
- Answers that ignore the historical focus set in the question. Answers give a general evaluation of the source without explaining how it might be valuable to a historian studying a set topic.
- Over-reliance on lengthy quotations with little supporting knowledge and/or explicit assessment of value in relation to the question set.

Questions 2-4: Essay questions

- Demonstrate a clear and full understanding of the question and its demands.
- Provide a balanced, analytical response which reviews the issues raised by the question.
- Provide appropriate and full coverage of the question, with appropriate supporting evidence.
- Substantiate judgements on the issues, throughout the answer and/ or in an extended conclusion.

Qualities seen in more successful responses

- Evidence of careful planning seen in the structure and organisation of the answer.
- An analytical approach which avoids lengthy narrative passages.
- Appropriate range, both in relation to any date range identified in the question and of issues to be considered.

- Balance of treatment, used to advance an argument and with appropriate judgement of the issues.
- Use of well selected supporting information.
- Provide an effective introduction which sets out the argument to be advanced and an effective conclusion demonstrating overall judgement.

Qualities seen in less successful responses

- Limited evidence of effective planning and structuring.
- Tendency towards partial responses to the question asked, either in terms of the date range specified in the question or range of issues to be considered.
- Inclusion of descriptive passages not clearly linked to the question.
- Over-lengthy introductions which do little more than provide contextual information.
- Inclusion of conclusions which repeat points already made.
- Issues with, or an absence of, sustained analysis and judgement.
- Occasional use of inappropriate language, such as over-use of first person etc.

Individual questions

Report on Question 1

Responses to this question were very variable. Some students engaged strongly with the question, demonstrating a very good understanding of the value and limitations of the sources in relation to the problems besetting the Labour Party in the 1980s. However, more students than anticipated showed only a rudimentary awareness of the issue and resorted to rather generic, pre-learned approaches to the evaluation of both provenance and content.

The quality of the judgements provided on the value of each source was also very mixed. Stronger answers identified both value and limitation supported by detailed and precise contextual information, using this as the basis for a clear and thorough summative statement at the end of each source analysis. Weaker answers resorted to an often quite cursory and generalised final statement.

Overall, the majority of students were able to reach Level 3 but more than expected struggled with the demands of the question.

Source A

Most students were able to offer some evaluation of the provenance of the source. Stronger answers recognised that Haseler was clearly a partisan participant in the struggle for the heart and soul of the party and fully explored the pros and cons of one-sided sources such as this. Weaker answers merely commented that Haseler was ‘biased.’

A surprising number of students did not fully explore the significance of the nature of the source: ‘a major televised debate,’ in which a sitting Labour Party MP so publicly condemned the direction of travel of the party. Some students misread the provenance, wrongly asserting that he had already been expelled from the party at the time of the debate. Many answers rightly challenged the value of the source on the grounds of chronology, namely that the debate was held right at the beginning of the 80s so had limited value to an historian studying the Labour Party throughout the decade. This was an appropriate limitation but did not necessarily invalidate the source completely as some argued.

The content of the source encouraged students to develop their understanding of the burgeoning divisions within the party at the beginning of the decade. Some responses drifted from the focus of the question by describing the Gaitskell/Bevan splits of the 50s, however most recognised the importance of a new third party (the SDP) emerging from amongst Labour’s moderates.

Some students struggled to explain Haseler’s reference to ‘extremist infiltrators.’ Indeed, knowledge of the Militant Tendency, the most well-known of these so-called infiltrators, was quite limited.

Few students explored Haseler’s tone of impending political disaster facing a country increasingly torn apart by polarised extremes. Of those who did, some rightly challenged his doom-laden prediction: Labour moved back to the party centre ground under first Kinnock, and subsequently, Smith and Blair, whilst Thatcher was hounded out of her party and replaced by the more moderate Major.

Source B

Many commentaries on the provenance of the source failed to go beyond largely generic statements about Margaret Thatcher, assuming (rightly) that it was valuable for who she was, but often uncritically asserting that what she wrote was 'accurate' or 'the truth,' because of who she was. Overall, the provenance of this source generally required a more nuanced approach, particularly in relation to the value of autobiographical sources.

Many students picked up on Thatcher's statement that the SDP reached its zenith in 1983 and were able to support this through election statistics for 1983 and 1987. Many, however, failed to challenge her assertions about Labour policies. Clearly, the Labour manifesto of 1983 went down like a lead balloon with many of the electorate, but her reference to 'sinister revolutionaries' threatening the very fabric of the British state might have been challenged. Foot's manifesto certainly failed to read the prevailing public mood but, in some respects, such as its commitment to unilateralism, it reflected long held aspirations amongst many Labour supporters.

Interestingly, few students chose to consider why Thatcher might be so complimentary of Foot's character and abilities, given that he was often pilloried in the media for his characteristically dishevelled appearance.

Source C

Responses to this source were generally the weakest of the three, partly because many students had little knowledge of the Militant Tendency, and because many did not understand Hogan's references to 'betrayal.'

Some students were unsure about the use of the term 'activist' in the provenance and assumed wrongly that Hogan was either an MP or just an ordinary working class Labour supporter. The more perceptive answers recognised that Hogan's anger and resentment of the parliamentary leadership of the party after Foot had not dissipated, even given the passage of so much time.

It was common for weaker answers to focus on Thatcher's policies rather than Hogan's vilification of the Labour leadership. Stronger answers developed discussion around the leadership of Neil Kinnock and his campaign to expel Militant from the party and to drive the party back to the centre ground. Some well-informed students were able to discuss Militant's foothold in Liverpool, but few seemed to have heard of Kinnock's *bête noire* – Derek Hatton.

Question 1 – Exemplification of Level 5 qualities

Source A is an extract of a moderate Labour MP's debate in 1980 during which Michael Foot was party leader. It explains that the Labour party during the 1980s was a party of extremism and quite different to what it used to be in the age of Attlee and Gaitskell.

In terms of provenance, this source is very useful in understanding the problems of the Labour Party in the 1980s as the speaker himself was a member of the Labour Party in 1980. Given Haseler's personal membership in the parliamentary party, the information which he offers is potentially accountable as he would have had first hand experience in handling issues around parliamentary debates and also hearing what the leaders in the opposition frontbench had to say. As a moderate Labour MP, it also make the source valuable in understanding the moderate faction of the Labour party led by members like Roy Jenkins, as they were the objecting faction of the party which were always against the leftists led by Benn and Foot at the time; being a moderate also meant that one can understand the divisions within the party more as any official statement that has been published by the Labour Party would have leaned left due to the leadership of the party being left wing by nature. However, this source is only reflective of Haseler as a Labour MP until 1980, which suggests that because of his consequential expulsion from the party in 1981, this source does not fully cover the changes of the Labour Party from 1981 onwards. Rather, Haseler makes a prediction that under Foot, Labour would continually be left leaning, whilst not forecasting the moderate changes brought by Kinnock in subsequent years. therefore, the provenance is valuable in understanding the initial worries of moderates, but is unrepresentative of the actual events that occur throughout the decade.

Good eval of Haseler's value as a source, tho no wider discussion of the prov

In terms of content, the source A is valuable in understanding the problems of the Labour party as it correctly points out the alienation of moderate candidates from the party since

Foot had taken charge of party leadership. The source mentions that "moderates in the party are increasingly intimidated by the extremist infiltrators." This is backed up by the fact that after the collapse of Callaghan's government in 1979, moderate members, even Roy Jenkins, were threatened by members of the labour left to follow suit with extremist marxist thoughts, amongst those the rise of Trotskyist inter party divisions such as the Militant Tendency led by Benn. This has the implication that due to the left leaning change in the leadership of the party, moderate members have not been able to voice their concerns and carry on with the social democratic values promoted by previous leaders such as Gaitskell and Attlee. In terms of looking at the 1980s as a whole, the content is yet somewhat limited as Haseler had not, in 1980, been able to experience the liberal changes made under Kinnock, as well as the beginning of reforms that were to be made from the 1980s onwards under young labour MPs like Blair and Brown. This shows that even if the content is right in

describing the fear of the left oppressing the moderates, it does not cover the later liberal changes that are yet to be made in 1980. Nonetheless, for understanding the situation of Labour in 1980, the content of the source is valuable and accurate.

Balanced,
informed
commentary

The emphasis of the source promotes the idea that moderate Labour members are hoping to revert to social democracy in the 1980s, which was not exactly representative of the entire party but does encompass the views of leavers who later became SDP members. By repeating the term "social democratic" in the source, Haseler evidently seeks to suggest that some Labour members preferred the old methods of social democracy over marxism. In fact, this is somewhat correct as moderates like Jenkins had praised the liberal reforms that were pushed through during his ten years in government prior to the 1980s, which he

though would be best if continued. This is indicative of the thought that the moderate faction of the Labour party preferred to adopt Tony Crosland's welfare state ideology, which somewhat continued the legacy of Attlee's post war reforms in the Labour party. However, his emphasis on social democracy undermines the fact that there are also many leftists who disagree with Crosland's ideology in the 1980s. For example, Foot, Benn, and other leftists drafted the 1983 manifesto which focused on renationalisation and other form of common ownership, later known as the "Longest Suicide Note in Histroy." This shwos that even in the time of privatisation and Thatcherism, the majority of Labour's leadership was still rigorously left-leaning. therefore, in terms of emphasis, the source does cover the sentiment of the moderates in 1980, but failes to encompass the views of the problematic and loony left under Foot's leadership in understanding the core ideologies of the leftists opposing Haseler.

Good dev'tment. Thoughtful commentary with insight

The evaluation of provenance is good, despite not discussing the nature of the source. Value and limitation is considered and, unlike weaker answers, key participants on the left and right are named. The final judgement is concisely expressed and reasonably sophisticated.

Analysis of the content is well contextualised. The reference to Crosland, a socialist intellectual on the right of the party, indicates a high degree of knowledge and understanding. This aspect of the answer is also well-balanced, recognising that the majority of the leadership 'was still rigorously left leaning.'

Overall, by no means perfect but the answer is balanced, supported and substantiated.

Report on Question 2

The 1950s is a popular aspect of the specification, particularly in relation to questions that focus on the post-war economic boom and its impact on people's lives. The question was, therefore, attractive to a large number of students.

Weaker responses tended to fill the page with descriptions of pre-learned material about, for example, the increased availability of mod-cons, the number of visitors to Butlins or the emergence of teenagers, at the expense of evaluation. Stronger responses focused more analytically, producing much more differentiated responses about the extent to which lives were transformed.

In addition, stronger responses considered the role of Conservative governments in bringing about change, whereas weaker responses either ignored this or simply added the odd passing comment in this direction.

The question was very open-ended, and students were able to reach a high level through a variety of approaches. The most successful responses acknowledged that some changes were transformative but balanced their answers through a range of analysis, most often by pointing to the very limited transformation of women's lives or the lack of progressive change experienced by minority groups, or by referencing the continuing power of the Establishment (despite some decline in deference) and enduring class structures.

The weakest answers became bogged down in descriptions of Churchill as a leader ('he did not do much') or the Suez crisis ('it did not help') or the 'stop-go' economy ('it did or did not help').

Report on Question 3

This was the least popular of the three essay questions and responses consequently varied enormously. For some students it was a positive choice, for many it was clearly the lesser of several evils.

Nevertheless, there were many strong responses from well-informed students who were able to provide detailed analysis of the pros and cons of membership of the EEC (an important, landmark achievement reflecting very well on Heath and boosting our political and economic standing, but at the expense of some disadvantageous entry requirements). They were well briefed on the health of the special relationship (some strains but on the whole a continuing, meaningful partnership), understood Heath's Cold War interventions (playing a role in détente and improving relations with China) and the impact of decolonisation and relationships with the Commonwealth.

The weakest responses had only a sketchy knowledge of foreign affairs and often resorted to long descriptions of Heath's domestic woes in an attempt, often forlorn, to argue that this weakened our international position and/or drifted into detailed discussions of issues in Northern Ireland, not understanding that this was largely a matter of domestic not foreign policy.

Judgements tended to be relatively positive towards Heath's handling of Britain's international position, though a number of perceptive responses also emphasised his weaknesses and failures. For example: Britain was too late to the EEC party; it was still America's poodle; the loss of an imperial role and weakening Commonwealth ties e.g. ignored by Rhodesia, and unable to prevent China having designs on Hong Kong.

Report on Question 4

On the whole, this was a very accessible question and a popular choice. Most students were able to balance their answers effectively and provide a good range of discussion.

A few students misunderstood what constituted 'sleaze' and what constituted 'scandal,' but most were very knowledgeable about Major's difficulties resulting from his promotion of 'back to basics' but constantly having it thrown back in his face by what seemed a never-ending stream of highly publicised misconduct from his own MPs.

The strongest responses not only offered a precise range of examples of sleaze and scandal but also clearly acknowledged the persistence of the issue throughout Major's premiership and the consequential damage it did to his own reputation. Some students drew very effective links between 'sleaze and scandal' and the satirical lampooning of Major himself.

Students were able to balance the answer by reference to a wide range of issues: divisions in the Conservative Party (Europe, social versus progressive conservatism), economic faux pas (ERM, PFIs),

stumbles in domestic policy (Cones Hotline) and the rise and impact of New Labour. Students did not need to make reference to all of these factors to reach a higher level, but the most successful responses were able to demonstrate why some factors were more important than others, rather than merely to assert the fact.

Question 04 – Exemplification of Level 5 qualities

The conservative government led by John Major from 1992 to 1997 was significantly weakened by the '97 election due to the failures associated with party policy as well as party scandals. Sleaze had the detrimental effect of weakening the public image of the party due to the misbehaviour and some occasional deaths of ministers, which caused considerable mockery towards major's role as party leader. The Maastricht rebels since 1992 was also key in weakening Major's government due to the fact that he was, from that point onwards, seen as a failed attempt to unify the factionalised cabinet. Economic failures in his early premiership was also quite disastrous to the point where he costed the Tories the reputation of fiscal responsibility, which had deeply affected voters' view towards the competence of Major's government on fiscal policies. Overall, it is feasible to argue that out of all three convincing and publicly known areas of failure, economic failures was the strongest factor which weakened his government until 1997.

Clear argument signposted

Economic policies under Major had the disastrous effect of costing votes by 1997 and losing the confidence of the electorate as Major's decisions had undermined the Tory party's longstanding reputation of fiscal responsibility. For instance, in 1992 Major assigned Norman Lamont to overcome the excessive manipulations with Sterling's exchange rate against the Deutsche Mark as part of the ERM policy signed in 1990. This eventually caused Bank of England base rates to rise by more than 5% per day and the eventual slowdown and

collapse of the London Stock Exchange after leaving the exchange rate mechanism with European counterparts. Major's government at the time also failed to suppress George Soros in his attempts to manipulate stock prices, which eventually resulted in a financial collapse. This has the implication that Major and Lamont's economic policies in 1992 not only created large monetary fluctuations in the BoE, but also caused a significant decrease in investors' confidence in the stock exchange, thus leading to a recession after the lack of aggregate demand growth coming out of the ERM crisis. Moreover, other economic policies such as the PFI had failed as up to 1997, of roughly 80-90 PFI initiatives, 60 were late and 8 were abandoned. This shows that apart from the ERM crisis, other policies such as public private initiatives failed to create the supply side output that Major had anticipated, in other words meaning that the government's outsourced fiscal schemes were seen as a waste of resources. Using the examples of the ERM and PFIs, it is arguably evident that the public's view towards the Major's government would be mass dissatisfaction towards their economic policies, which later costed them votes in the 1997 election. However, economic policies were not entirely disastrous during the 1990s. In fact, from 1992 to 1997, Major decreased the size of unemployed workers from 3 million immediately post ERM down by 1 million. This means that in terms of getting workers back into jobs, Major's economic policies did see substantial effect, albeit this still meant that at least 1.5 million were unemployed, nevertheless better than his predecessor's unemployment rate of 3 million when she left office. Overall, this shows that Major did have some macroeconomic

achievements that possibly averted the total disastrous economic failures caused in his early premiership. However, given the publicity against the ERM crisis and the short recession that followed after leaving the mechanism, as well as overseeing the failed PFI projects, it is likely that the public saw Major's economic policies as the most significant area of weakness of his government from 1992 to 1997.

Convincingly argued and well-understood - supported in depth

Major's failure to control the Maastricht rebels was also a significant area that weakened his government as he was seen as a incompetent prime minister who could not control cabinet colleagues. Upon the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 with the EEC which strengthened European integration, some prominent colleagues such as John Redwood and Michael Portillo openly criticised the prime Minister's decisions. In fact, Redwood even challenged Major to a leadership contest in 1995, seeking to oust Major with the support of Thatcherites and eurosceptics. This has the implication that cabinet colleagues under Major were extensively against his European policies, and this certainly has the effect of downplaying him as the government's leader as he had failed to create a united government fully supportive of his policy agendas. This was further portrayed in his private interview where he mistakenly called these Maastricht rebels "bastards" on camera, which also highlighted to the general public that Major was unable to tame his colleagues through his use of profane language when describing them. However, it can also be argued that Major did a relatively good job in uniting (or at least temporarily easing) members of his cabinets after his election victory in 1992, as well as his contest victory in 1995. For example, Major's decision to place Redwood and Portillo in cabinet was seen as a politically smart move to unite his party, as under the British constitutional convention of collective ministerial

responsibility, both Redwood and Proillo were unable to criticise Major to an overwhelming extent apart from a few speeches in public as they face the risk of resignation if they breach this ministerial conduct. From a political point of view, Major had managed to reduce the amount of objection he is receiving from within his party as his main Eurosceptic rivals were then prohibited from breaching ministerial rules. Furthermore, the 1995 Back me or Sack Me campaign also proved to both the entire party and the public that Major's government was united as the majority of party members still preferred Major as their leader, apart from notoriously vocal Eurosceptics. Overall, this suggests that through political manipulation, Major was able to convince his party and the public that he was able to partially silence Eurosceptics by not only using constitutional conventions to limit their authority, but also using the 1995 contest to prove that his government was largely supportive of him. Nonetheless, Maastricht rebels were a significant source of Major's government weakness due to the extent to which objecting politicians in his own party were willing to fracture the

Highly conceptual commentary, balanced and differentiated

relationship between Major and his fellow MPs, though this weakness does not seem to override the weakness of his government on economic policies.

From a public point of view, Sleaze was probably a clear sign of failures within the Major government, given that the ethical reputation of Major's cabinet ministers and Tory MPs turned out as sources of public mockery. For example, the Sun boasted their success in obtaining information about David Mellor's affair in their headlines such as the infamous "Chelsea Strip" issue. Another example of Sleaze was the traumatising incident when the junior minister, Stephen Milligan, died in his home from what was later discovered as autoerotic asphyxiation. These examples of the misconduct of conservative MPs and

ministers did highlight to the electorate that Major was not even able to lead a group of sensible politicians, whilst on the other hand he himself had advocated for social conservatism and sanity. As such, this weakens the conservative party and Major's government as Sleaze cases were later used by political opponents or cartoonists to make fun of major's party, thus discretely also making fun of his incompetence to rule. However, it can also be said that Major was somewhat successful in upkeeping himself as the representative of the small c conservative faction of the party. In 1993, he had started the Back to Basics campaign, which was a political campaign to convince all that the Conservative party was heading back towards normalcy and socially conservative values, including his appreciation for members of the party such as Mary Whitehouse. This has the meaning that while some of his fellow party members had conducted unethical actions, Major attempted with some effect to save the reputation of the Tories, and thus by 1997 there were still voters in the nation who supported the Conservative party as the party of social conservatism, as highlighted in the winning of 166 in what was forecasted an absolute landslide for Blair. Overall, Major did effectively convince some members of his party and constituents that the Conservative party had always upheld tradition and socially conservative values through his 1993 campaign. However, given the tabloids' revelance of ministers misbehaving and public mockery of those ministers who have been caught red-handed, Sleaze was difficult for Major to overturn. Therefore, it can be argued that Sleaze was a notable source of weakness for his government, albeit possibly not undermining the effects of economic disasters and the Eurosceptic wing.

Careful, substantiated judgement, tho no discussion of significant political scandals such as 'cash for questions'

In conclusion, it should be recognised that all three factors, Sleaze, the eurosceptics and economic failures were issues that weakened the Conservative government under Major. However, while Sleaze did create a lot of public upheaval, Major did have his opportunity to fight back through his 1993 campaign. As for the Maastricht rebels, although members like Redwood and Portillo were actively against integrating the EEC, their voices were somewhat limited through Major's political strategy. On the other hand, given the widespread public resentment and the longlasting trauma of the ERM crisis as well as ongoing PFI failures, despite Major's success in improving employment rates, his economic failures were seen as the most significant factor that weakened his government from 1992 to 1997.

A conceptual answer, though not fully comprehensive (hence lower in the level) and possibly overplays the positive impact of 'back to basics', but a fully analytical and well-substantiated discussion.
L5

The introduction clearly signposts the direction of argument, which is sustained throughout, reaching a well-substantiated judgement, and the answer is analysis-led. Contextual knowledge is strong, precise and very well-deployed. Economic understanding is particularly impressive and, unlike weaker or average answers, includes a wide range of evidence, not just the ERM crisis, to demonstrate the party's loss of its reputation for fiscal responsibility. The answer also links issues well, such as party instability, divisions over Europe and the Thatcherite legacy. It has gaps – no discussion of political scandals or the 'Blair' factor (hence a mid-level award) – but overall, convincing and conceptual.

Further guidance

Our reports on the exams are part of a suite of support we offer to enhance your understanding of our assessments and your students' performance.

Mark ranges and award of grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [results statistics](#) page of our website.

Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA)

Use our exam results analysis tool to create and customise different reports to help understand your students' performance.

ERA is our free online service for you to gain a detailed insight into your students' results. You can:

- analyse your students' scores for each exam question
- identify topics, skills and types of question where students may need further support
- compare your students' performance with those of other classes and with students in other AQA schools nationally.

For more information on ERA, log in through Centre Services.

Professional development

Attend one of our [courses](#) where you can review example responses from students and commentaries from our examiners.

Contact us

Our friendly team will be happy to support you between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 0161 958 3861

Email: history@aqa.org.uk

aqa.org.uk