



A-level
History

7042/2M

Report on the Examination

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Question 01

This question required students to assess the value of the sources in explaining the situation surrounding Home Rule around the years 1911 to 1914 as indicated by the dates shown in the sources. Students tended to have general knowledge of main issues, but often found it difficult to apply this to the specific subject matter in the sources, as explained below. There was often a lack of fundamental understanding of the ideologies behind the Home Rule crisis, such as religion, or what Home Rule would have actually meant for Ireland, with confusion between this and independence. Overall, students were more confident in discussing provenance and tone, than the content itself.

It is important to note that there is no requirement to offer an introduction or overall conclusion in response to this question, with a number of students taking considerable time to suggest which sources was the most valuable; this is not required at A Level. In assessing content there was a tendency for students to focus into a single sentence and then overly elaborate, rather than consider the overall emphasis of the source (and therefore often missing the point of the source, as particularly prevalent with source B). The weakest responses failed to actually evaluate the sources, instead simply stating the provenance and explaining the content through contextual knowledge, but not using this to say how the source is, or is not, valuable in understanding the Home Rule crisis.

Source A

The vast majority of students were well aware of Carson and his role for the Ulster Unionists, and how the passionate tone of the source was very valuable in understanding the extent of opposition to Home Rule. Many recognised that this speech, coming from before the third bill was introduced, demonstrated how ingrained opposition was, and that the timing was significant as a weakening of the Conservative dominated House of Lords made the passing of a third bill more inevitable.

Many understood that Carson's reference to economic benefits stemmed from the fact that Ulster was the industrial centre of Ireland, with more in common with English cities like Liverpool than the predominantly agricultural Southern Ireland. However, many stated that Carson was upset that the economic connections with the UK would be lost and trade heavily affected, when the point being made was that Ulster businessmen were rightly concerned that the tax burdens of a devolved parliament would fall upon the prosperous Ulster region. The weakest answers stated that Britain couldn't 'afford' Home Rule, with long description of the economic circumstances at the time.

Most students also failed to identify that the 'civil liberties' Carson was concerned about losing were those tied to religion, with fears that a Catholic dominated devolved parliament would discriminate against a predominantly Protestant Ulster population. The strongest responses did make this connection, making reference to 'Home Rule'. Weaker responses thought that Carson was saying they would lose access to the Liberal Social Reforms, such as pensions.

Source B

Most students identified Bonar Law as the leader of Conservatives at this time, and therefore the source has value in seeing the viewpoint of the main opposition at this time. The strongest responses also recognised Bonar Law's personal links with Ulster, hence his particularly strong views. The number of people at the rally was rightly identified as key in showing the extent of opposition to Home Rule as the

third Bill began to progress, with better answers also pointing out that perhaps this was a narrow viewpoint, with Oxfordshire a very conservative region of the country.

However, very few students recognised just how aggressive and inflammatory this speech was, particularly in coming from the Leader of the Opposition. Most assumed the suggestion that there 'are things stronger than parliamentary majorities' was a reference to the House of Lords veto, rather than support for the growing aggression surrounding Home Rule. Students did understand that the reference to 'lighting the fires of civil war' would indeed come to passthrough the growth of the Ulster Volunteer Force and Irish Volunteers, but most relied upon detail from 1916 and beyond to support this, going into depth about post-war violence, rather than focusing on the gun-running and initial issues of relevance here.

Most students did identify that there was value in Bonar Law's suggestion that Home Rule was being forced through against the will of the British people, contextualised by the outcome of the 1910 elections. Stronger responses questioned the partisan nature of this view, with the fact that the Irish Nationalists were the largest party in Ireland showing there was actually strong support for Home Rule. Many saw that anti-Home Rule sentiment was ingrained in the ideology of the Conservative Party (which had renamed itself in this vain), but weaker answers suggested that Bonar Law has only taken this view to try and 'win over' those at the rally and defeat the Liberals, failing to identify the ideological stance of the Conservatives.

Source C

Most students recognised that the recollections presented in this source offered value as they came from someone who experienced this crisis first-hand and, with the benefit of hindsight, could explain the crisis from a less emotional viewpoint. Stronger responses also identified that O'Shiel's later shift to Sinn Féin reflected how this crisis would escalate, though as an eventual proponent of independence we once again have a particularly one-sided view. In weaker responses the provenance was often more generalised, only suggesting that as it was from decades after the crisis, he would have simply 'forgotten what happened'.

Most recognised that O'Shiel's initial optimism came from the political situation in 1910/11 making it seem inevitable that the Third Home Rule Bill would become a reality, and that this optimism waned as Ulster opposition grew and Home Rule was put on hold at the outbreak of the First World War. Many questioned the value of the source in suggesting that the Irish Volunteers turned their 'back on violence' given that this militia group was formed in reaction to the UVF and also participated in their own gun-running, perhaps reflecting a most 'rose-tinted' view of past events.

Question 02

There was a good understanding here surrounding the fear of communism and Labour's role in their association with the extreme left. Most could easily discuss the Anglo-Soviet Treaty and the Campbell Case, showing that Labour were 'soft on communism', with stronger answers suggesting that the Zinoviev Letter was only able to have a significant impact due to Labour already having established a connection with the far-left. A significant number of students couldn't show the role of the Campbell Case in being the actual 'downfall' of the government, leading to the resignation and election. Some

students had confused the concepts of 'socialism' and 'communism', not recognising that one is more extreme than the other.

The main issue for this question usually came in the balance. Many strayed into answering why the Conservatives won the 1924 election, with much description on constituencies, funding and general 1920s politics, rather than explaining the downfall of Labour. Better responses linked the strengths of the Conservatives to the downfall, such as connections to the media and the exposure of the Zinoviev Letter. Although many identified the existence of a minority government ensuring that Labour's hands were tied, most didn't develop this to show the role of the Liberals, and how their collapse shifted the political landscape.

Stronger responses suggested that MacDonald's strength in foreign policy show other factors were indeed at play, and the most discerning argued that there was no 'downfall' given that they won more votes in 1924 than 1923 and were able to form another government following the next election.

Question 03

The most conceptual awareness was demonstrated in response to this question, with the majority of responses identifying that 'growth' was variable and depended very much on region and industry. There were strong discussions on the declining staples, with lack of mechanisation and structural unemployment, balanced with the success of new industries like cars, with Britain becoming the second largest car manufacturer in the world. Many recognised that the new industries were located away from the regions that lost their staple industries and that government intervention often had little impact in the most affected regions, with improvements in some areas coming at the cost of others (Jarrow was quoted by the vast majority).

The strongest answers discussed different sectors, identifying how coming off the Gold Standard led to a reduction in interest rates, and how this 'cheap money' led to a housing boom which drove a growth in construction. Many discussed how trade started to improve, again thanks to the devaluation of sterling, but that the Sterling Area and Imperial Preference did little to replace what was lost due to the world-wide depression. Most discussed the issues of agriculture, and how Marketing Boards helped to prop-up a struggling industry. Many recognised that overall 'growth' was only really attained once Britain began to prepare for the Second World War..

Weaker responses failed to focus on the 'economic' situation, instead going into lengthy description about general living standards (such as reduced dole payments) without showing the existence, or lack of, economic growth for the nation. Some spent a significant portion of their answer providing detail on the first years of the depression and National Government policy, without addressing the concept of growth over the decade.

Question 04

The vast majority of students could successfully articulate the change for women during the war, with a move from the domestic sphere to the world of heavy industry and even auxiliary service. Most could balance this change with the fact that women usually earned less than men in the same role, and most returned back to traditional roles once the war had ended. Indeed, the better responses recognised the temporary nature of some societal change. Children was another common theme, with the idea that

their evacuation and circumstances of war led to a significant disruption to their education, and they were the first to experience substantial legislative change through the 1944 Education Act.

The strongest responses identified how greater government intervention, alongside exposure to the harsh realities of war, led to a change in political attitudes, with the acceptance of left-wing ideals in the Beveridge report and the victory of Labour in 1945 on a manifesto promising the advent of the modern welfare state. For some students there was a tendency to move too far beyond 1945, with extensive description of the NHS and other changes under Labour, but this could be rewarded where it was grounded in an understanding of how the war had brought about this change.

The biggest issue with this question was that many struggled to grasp what was actually meant by change to 'society', often straying into lengthy description on the general impact of the war (bombings, rationing, death, conscription...) without explaining what social impact this had; for example most knew in detail about the introduction of rationing, but few talked about this as part of a shared experience (class unity) embodied in the concept of the 'blitz spirit' (with balance being that class divides still existed eg those more well-off could afford to utilise the black market). The expectation here was a discussion of key societal factors like gender, class and attitude, not just the general experience for people in the war, which was of course a change from normal life. Those who formulated an answer surrounding societal factors were duly rewarded.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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