



AS

# History

7041/1K The making of a Superpower: USA 1865-1920

Report on the Examination

7041  
June 2024

Version: 1.0

---

Further copies of this Report are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://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.

**General.**

This paper produced a full range of responses with marks reflecting the broad range of ability in the student entry. Students earning the higher marks showed significant knowledge as well as exemplary skills. Equally there were very few students who failed to offer at least a basic response.

**Question 01.**

Students found both extracts very accessible and were able to identify key issues in both. Immigration and economic growth were clearly topics with which students were familiar. The majority of students were able, if only at a basic level, to distinguish between the somewhat benign picture of the immigrant experience in Extract A and the more challenging account in Extract B. Despite an obvious familiarity with the subject area contextual knowledge was rarely used well by students. The result was that commentary was sometimes restricted to material contained within the extracts. Most responses took a broad view of the extracts with very few adopting a line-by-line approach.

Effective use of supporting evidence included some developed accounts of urban and ghetto life, conditions in meat factories, the 1917 Immigration Act and the prejudice displayed by many of those with a WASP background. Weaker students frequently referred to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. As in previous years students with limited contextual knowledge used the material in one extract as part of the evaluation of the other.

Most responses dealt with the two extracts in turn, followed by a concluding paragraph. Very often it was the strength of this final paragraph which determined the final level. More assured answers delivered a running comparison with the final paragraph assuming much less significance.

**Question 02.**

Students found this a challenging question requiring understanding, knowledge and the ability to bring together evidence from a number of varied sources. The result was that responses took many different forms with students emphasising varied aspects of the question. Common themes included treatment of the native population, the role of immigrants, economic growth and the development of the railroads. There were few references to the role of the political parties. Given the nature of the question there were few examples of learned approaches.

Weaker answers tended to accept that the West was entirely different from other regions of the USA, although many of these responses made no specific reference to either the North or the South. These responses offered very little to challenge the proposition.

Higher level responses identified key features of the West and then drew out significant differences / similarities with other regions. These responses were able to show some wide-ranging knowledge in their identification of the specific characteristics of the North and the South. Many of these were broad in scope and specific in detail.

In their conclusions most students tended to focus on the unique characteristics of the West. Higher level answers were also able to identify some common features shared with other regions.

**Question 03.**

A popular question on a topic for which students were clearly well prepared. The question allowed students to show wide-ranging knowledge and understanding. Most answers understood that oil was only one of the factors responsible for the development of the US economy in the years 1890-1914. Most answers were therefore balanced with due regard given to factors other than oil.

Comments on the significance of the oil industry were often quite limited and lacked detailed support. Many of these answers extended the discussion to include other natural resources including coal, iron, lead and copper. Others sought to include steel as part of the discussion. A few answers related its importance to the spin-off industries it facilitated. Weaker answers included evidence from outside the time frame or lacked specific supporting detail.

Comments on factors other than oil were extremely varied. Higher level responses offered a range of other factors with immigration, big business and government policy being amongst the most popular alternative reasons for economic growth. A few responses sought to include technology, foreign policy and agriculture as factors. A small number of students sought to argue that overall, it was the inter-play of factors which led to economic growth.

In their conclusions students invariably drew attention to the importance of oil but frequently argued that other factors were either equally or more important.

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

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