



A-level  
**History**

7042/1J

Report on the Examination

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## Question 1

On the whole, students were able to identify the arguments put forward in each extract.

Most students were able to use a range of contextual knowledge to support the interpretations, although for many this was less specific for Extract A. Many students this year were able to successfully challenge the extracts. The responses were marked holistically, so students were able to access the higher levels of the markscheme if they have not challenged all 3 extracts, if there was balance across the answer and an argument was being made. Some students produced very strong responses which argued that Extract C was wholly convincing. It is worth centres passing on to students that they are able to do this. It is also worth emphasising to students the importance of evaluation, and making an argument about the extracts, as many are able to understand the interpretations, but make three very similar judgements.

For Extract A, whilst some students were able to provide relevant details on competition from Japan, tariffs, export figures and/or US debt, many were not able to adequately support or challenge these economic arguments. It could be noted by centres that whenever students are required to produce economic statistics, they struggle and could be advised to learn these areas of the specification more thoroughly. There was a lot of commentary relating to nationalist protest in India, which wasn't the main point of the extract and was often not fully relevant. The military argument was less well-developed, with some irrelevancy on the 'Mutiny'.

For Extract B, For B most students were able to identify the arguments on the First and Second World Wars and the 'peaceful' departure from India with varying degrees of support/evaluation. This extract was most likely to be challenged successfully by students, and many also had lots of relevant supporting detail on interwar political changes. Again, some students wanted to focus mainly on nationalism, which was alluded to but not the main overall argument of the extract.

Extract C was the most successfully evaluated by students and they were able to focus on Gandhi as a key argument, again with varying quality of contextual knowledge. Fewer seemed to have developed the argument on the impact of the Second World War or the lack of unity within the nationalist movement, which might reflect a timing pressure.

## Question 2

This was the most popular of the essay questions, but also had a slightly lower average mark than the other two. Some students had an impressively detailed knowledge of developments in Southern Africa in this period and were able to construct strong analytical responses with a range of knowledge on gold, diamonds and Rhodes. Not all students explicitly linked their ideas to expansion, and there were lots of factual errors in which territories were overtaken when, with the status of the Transvaal and the First Boer War seeming to be a source of much confusion. Every time there is a question on Southern Africa in this period, many students who produce good work in other questions seem to muddle up political developments and dates, and is worth centres emphasising how important a detailed understanding of this section of the course. Some students developed the challenges from rivals, namely Germany, although support was often generalised around rivalry and the conferences without reference to events in Southern Africa, or focusing on other areas. Balance of argument was also been less secure on the interaction with indigenous tribes and the Boers, with often wider generalisation on the role of missionaries/cultural reasons, which are not clearly linked to expansion in South Africa. A number of students introduced events like the Jameson Raid, Milner, Second Boer War etc which are clearly outside of the time period

### Question 3

This was the second most popular question and there were some very strong responses. Many students showed a good knowledge of the Suez Canal and the role of Disraeli and the problems within Egypt leading to the 1882 riots and challenge from France. Far fewer students were able to develop answers that focused on the role of Baring and his actions in Egypt after 1882 particularly, although some did make reference to cotton. Most of the stronger responses were able to differentiate between the canal as a cause of the 1882 intervention in contrast with existing British economic interests other than the canal. There were lots of descriptive responses on Sudan, particularly of the role of Gordon, and a lack of understanding of British aims in the Sudan before his death. However, stronger answers were able to recognise reluctance and Kitchener's later intervention and motives, with some good detail on both Fashoda and Omdurman. Many responses did not mention the Sudan at all, and thus were not showing a good understanding of the question. Students found it more difficult to challenge the argument that British interests did revolve around protecting the Suez Canal, but some responses were strongly analytical and made convincing arguments.

### Question 4

This was the least popular of the essay questions, but many students who attempted it did have a good knowledge of this part of the specification. Many students made a strong argument for change over the period, with the initial importance of Empire, with a later shift to USA/Europe. There was relevant reference to the importance of Malaya, the Sterling Area, Tanganyika, Colonial Development schemes etc with accurate trading figures in some answers. This was balanced with a shift to USA and reliance through Marshall Aid, challenge at Suez, although more sophisticated arguments highlighting how the US was prepared to support Britain when challenging communism, for example in Malaya. These examples did need to be closely linked to Britain's economy, as some students branched off into a wider discussion of the importance of the Empire more generally in this period. Some students also developed the argument on economic immigration with varying degrees of success – it was fine to argue that immigration from the Empire was important to the British economy, but many students tied themselves up in knots trying to develop a counter argument.

It is worth emphasising to students more generally that they shouldn't attempt to counter-argue every point which is in their essays, as it does make their analysis rather contradictory! Less relevant approaches to the question introduced balance around cultural and popular support for empire which wasn't a valid approach. More generalised arguments on decolonisation that were not clearly linked to trade or commerce were also given less credit – many students tried to argue without much economic support that decolonisation meant the empire was becoming less important. Students should be discouraged from making up inaccurate trade statistics which is very common for responses on this part of the course. Some students attempted to distinguish between the Empire and Commonwealth, which wasn't really required, but done to good effect in some of the best answers.

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

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