

A LEVEL
Candidate Style Answers

HISTORY A

H505
For first teaching in 2015

Unit 1 Enquiries (Y101, Y103-105)

Version 1



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Introduction

OCR has produced these candidate style answers to support teachers in interpreting the assessment criteria for the new GCE History A specification and to bridge the gap between new specification release and availability of exemplar candidate work.

This content has been produced by senior OCR examiners, with the support of the Subject Specialist, to illustrate how the sample assessment questions might be answered and provide some commentary on what factors contribute to an overall grading. The candidate style answers are not written in a way that is intended to replicate student work but to demonstrate what a **'HIGH LEVEL'** or **'MEDIUM LEVEL'** response might include, supported by examiner commentary and conclusions.

As these responses have not been through full moderation and do not replicate student work, they have not been graded and are instead, banded to give an indication of the level of each response.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

Y101 Alfred and the Making of England 871-1016

Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that Alfred's success against his Viking opponents was due mainly to his skill as a diplomat and negotiator.

High level answer

Only source D argues that Alfred's success against the Vikings was due solely to his skill as a diplomat and negotiator. Sources B and C suggest that these skills may have helped, but they emphasise other factors, whilst source A suggests that it was Alfred's trickery as a spy that was the main reason for his success.

Source D, an extract from a peace treaty with the Viking leader Guthrum does put forward the view that Alfred was a skilled negotiator as he was able to agree a treaty that established territorial boundaries between the two forces and this was a considerable achievement given the military defeats that Alfred had suffered earlier, which had forced him into hiding in the marshes of Somerset at Athelney. However, although he was able to secure a quite favourable treaty, the source does not go on to tell us whether the treaty was a success and lasted or whether it was short lived and simply a cunning time-buying device by the Vikings so as to recover their strength. Moreover, in order to obtain the treaty, Alfred had had to recover his military position and gather together a force that was able to win battles, such as Edington – mentioned in C -, to force the Vikings to negotiate, so without the military victories he would not have been in the position to secure such a treaty.

Source C further emphasises the importance of military victories in forcing the Vikings to negotiate. The source puts forward the view that it was Alfred's military skill that was the most important reason, making reference to the importance of the 'shield-wall', the 'long and spirited attack' and finally the siege of the Viking camp which brought famine to them. The source also suggests that 'divine aid' helped Alfred in his victory, however as this was written by a monk it could be argued that it was likely to credit some of the victory to God. According to the source it was the military skill which ultimately forced Guthrum to make peace as it concludes by arguing that as a result of the siege they knew 'the horrors of famine, cold, fear, and at last of despair, they sought peace'. However, as this source was written by Asser, who later worked with Alfred and wrote a praiseworthy account of his life, his views should be treated with caution.

Source B is, in many ways, similar to C in its views. The main argument of B is that it was the naval force of Alfred, which defeated the Vikings. The source puts forward the view that on all occasions Alfred's navy encountered the Vikings they were victorious, mentioning that they 'captured all the ships, and slew the men' and that later in major battles the 'Saxons had the victory'. As with source C, it appears to be the military force of Alfred that was crucial. However, the source does also note that they were aided by the Frisians, which suggests that Alfred may have been a skilled negotiator as he had been able to create an alliance with them to get further assistance. The source focuses on the naval success and does not consider the land battles that were also needed to secure victory and therefore, because it is from the Anglo Saxon Chronicle, which is a wide ranging history of England does not cover all elements of the story.

Source A suggests that rather than either Alfred's skill as a negotiator or his military prowess that it was trickery and deception that allowed him to defeat the Vikings. The source argues that Alfred disguised himself and gained entry to the Viking camp where he was able to spy on them so that he was able to 'satisfy his mind on every matter which he wished to know'. However, this story should be treated with caution as not only was William of Malmesbury writing a long time after the actual event he claims to describe, but it seems unlikely that Alfred would have risked such an exploit. It certainly does not conform to the behaviour of a leader who, following military reversals, hid in the marshes at Athelney with just a small group of followers, waiting to build up his forces.

The sources do not support the view that it was Alfred's skill as a negotiator that enabled him to secure success against the Vikings. Source D is the only source that emphasises that element, but it ignores the military success that was needed to force peace on the Vikings, which is hinted at in C. Military force, both on land and at sea, were the most important factors as they forced the Vikings to agree to terms.

Examiner commentary

The sources are thoroughly examined and their content is clearly linked to the focus of the question. Evaluation and analysis of both the provenance and the content is strong. The argument is balanced and when own knowledge is applied to the sources it is relevant and supports the argument. The response is able to make links between the Sources, particularly between Sources D and C is a thoughtful way. The judgement follows logically from the rest of the response.

Medium level answer

The view that Alfred's success against the Vikings was due to his negotiating and diplomatic skills is supported by some Sources, but not by others. Source D, which is an extract from an official document, and therefore should be trustworthy, suggests that he was a skilled negotiator as he was able to reach a peace deal with Guthrum's Viking force. Alfred was able to secure a border or boundary between the two forces by negotiation. The treaty ended conflict which had been a problem for Alfred because of the size of the Great heathen Armies which had been sent to England. However, the source does not tell us if the treaty lasted and its terms were upheld, so it could be argued that we cannot tell if it was a complete success.

Source A suggests that Alfred's success was not due to his skill as a diplomat but his skill in tricking the Vikings. It argues that he was able to disguise himself as a minstrel and enter the Viking camp and 'satisfied his mind on every matter which he wished to know', presumably finding out about their military plans and tactics. However, as this source was written much later it should be treated with caution. It is unlikely that Alfred would have risked being discovered and undertaken such a risky venture.

Source B argues that it was his naval force that was the main factor in defeating the Vikings. The Sources catalogue a list of naval victories against the Vikings and the ability to capture their ships and men. The fact they were able to defeat 'a great naval force of Vikings' gives further support to the argument that Alfred had a powerful navy. The source also suggests that Alfred was able to assemble this large force on a regular basis, although it does also note that he helped from the Frisians. The Anglo Saxon Chronicle does not mention anything about land forces, perhaps because of its very nature and is unable to include everything, but as a result it may not give a complete picture of the military success.

This is confirmed in source C which shows that land forces were equally, if not more important. According to source C it was the victory at Edington and the subsequent surrounding of the Viking camp that was crucial. The source emphasises the military prowess of Alfred and argues that he was able to inflict a 'very great slaughter', in part because of his use of the 'shield-wall' but also because they fought fiercely in a 'long and spirited' attack. However, this source was written by Asser, who later worked with Alfred and wrote an account of the king's life, from which this extract is taken, and might therefore exaggerate and be full of praise for Alfred's skill.

Sources B and C put forward the view that it was military skill and success that brought Alfred victory, whether on land or at sea. Although D suggests that he was an able negotiator we do not know from the Sources whether the peace was a success, also source C says that it was the military victory and surrounding of Viking forces in their camp that resulted in the treaty. As a result his skills as a diplomat were not the main reason for his success.

Examiner commentary

The sources are used to try and address the focus of the question. Information from the Sources is analysed and linked to the question and an argument is pursued. The provenance of the sources is also considered, but it is not fully developed and in some instances is quite general. There is no use of own knowledge to test the Sources. As a result, this would be awarded a medium level and might even be on the cusp of a lower level answer.

Y103 England 1199-1272

Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that the years 1202-3 were a disaster for John.

High level answer

The sources suggest that following John's early success at Mirebeau, as shown in source A, his position deteriorated and sources B, C and D all put forward the view that after his initial victory his position worsened, losing land to the French (source C) and the trust of the English nobles (D), which would not have been helped by the actions described in source B.

The only source that disagrees with the view that 1202-3 was a disaster, but it should be noted that this source describes events at the start of the period and records one of John's few successes, with the capture of Arthur and opposition barons at Mirebeau. Even though the victory suggests success the fact that his succession had been challenged by Arthur and he was supported by barons, such as Geoffrey de Lusignan, suggests that there were already difficulties. It appears that even John recognized this as his letter to the barons in England gives the impression of the need to appeal to them for help and to stress throughout the letter that God was on his side. Therefore, although the source portrays a great military success with the relief of his mother, Eleanor, and the capture of Arthur, there is evidence of underlying problems, if not a disaster.

The underlying problems are developed in the other three sources and centre around the issue of Arthur, the military success of the French and the lack of trust among the barons. Source B, it could be argued does not show that these years were a disaster as John was able to remove Arthur as a threat by killing him. However, the report of how this was achieved would have been a disaster for John's reputation as the source argues that John acted when drunk and 'possessed by the devil', and is already describing him as a 'tyrant'. These rumours of John's complicity and involvement soon spread and lost him much support and therefore the initial success in removing his challenger to the throne was overshadowed. It can also be argued that these rumours only fuelled a loss of support for John, which culminated in his loss of Normandy, described in source C. It can also be argued that such reports were likely to be true as the chronicle was written by monks of an abbey whose patron was de Briouze, who had captured Arthur and would therefore be likely to know how events developed.

Sources C and D add further weight to the view that these years were a disaster as they describe John's loss of land in Normandy and the problems he would face in regaining it. Source C, however should be treated with some caution as it was written by a monk who, given John's treatment of the Church, was unlikely to be impartial and would also have limited access to knowledge of the events. However, his comments about the loss of castles are supported by John's loss of the crucial fortress of Chateau Gaillard, which was supposedly impenetrable, and then the later loss of Rouen, the major city in Normandy. The French King, Philip II is also able to take John's property and has captured the castellans. John's reaction also suggests that these events were a disaster as he seem unable to summon up the energy to respond and try to regain the lost land. Source D, however, is a little more positive as it argues that he did respond and went to England and would return, presumably with forces. However, his actions in returning to England caused disquiet and the source states that the barons feared 'that he would stay in England until too late', which was correct as John did not return. The growing disquiet among barons in Normandy is given further weight as the source reports that John 'feared treason' and was therefore forced to sleep in the castle, suggesting that support was ebbing away, which would make attempts to recapture the lost land much harder and this was made more likely by the rumour that 'most of his barons had sworn to hand him over to the king of France'. How much support John had lost from the barons by this time is a matter of debate and the source may stress this because it was written soon after the Barons War at the end of his reign and may want to show that the tensions and lack of trust among some had been building up for some time, emphasising in contrast the support of William Marshal for John and later his son.

The sources do largely support the view that these years were a disaster for John and a foretaste of further difficulties.

It can certainly be argued that the actions and losses described in Sources B, C and D were a major cause of his later difficulties, as in order to attempt to regain Normandy he subjected England to heavy taxation and harsh justice in order to raise funds. Therefore, the optimistic situation reported by John in A was not sustained and apparent initial success some became a disaster.

Examiner commentary

A very well focused answer, which thoroughly considers the issue of 'disaster'. The sources are evaluated thoroughly with their provenance given considered treatment and own knowledge used to support or challenge the views offered. The own knowledge is quite detailed and shows a good understanding of military developments in Normandy, which is used particularly well to evaluate sources C and D. The answer would be awarded a high level mark.

Medium level answer

The sources do mostly support the view that the years 1202-3 were a disaster of John. It is true because after his success at Mirebeau, where Arthur and a number of disloyal barons, who supported Arthur's claim to the throne were captured he lost further support following his murder of his nephew. The situation was made worse by the military failures that he faced. He lost control of the important castle of Chateau Gaillard and the important town of Rouen, which ultimately led to his loss of Normandy, from which he could not recover. He also lost support of more barons and his return to England was also a disaster as he began to alienate many there by his harsh rule, which was designed to raise money to recapture Normandy, which never happened.

Source A is the one source that does not suggest that 1202-3 were disastrous years for John as 'we captured our nephew Arthur' and also a number of important barons who supported Arthur. The source also relates how they had been able to relieve John's mother who had been besieged at Mirebeau. The source is a letter written by John to his barons and as John was involved in the events it is likely to be accurate, particularly as he would want to tell them the good news to ensure he had their support.

Source B does not directly say whether the years were a disaster or not. It could be suggested that in killing his main threat it was not a disaster, but the comment suggest it may not have been seen as such as John is described as 'possessed by the devil' and as 'tyrant' which would harm his reputation. The source was written by monks who supported the de Briouze family and it was William who had captured Arthur so they are likely to have had access to reliable information and can be trusted.

Source C certainly argues that the years were a disaster for John as he lost castles to the French, who also captured the castellans and took away many of John's goods. It also suggests that John did not respond to these losses, which would have damaged his position and made even more of a disaster. However, the source was written by a member of the clergy, a monk, and they did not like John because of his treatment of the Church and therefore it may exaggerate.

Source D describes John's response to the events described in C and suggests that he did respond by setting off for England to consult and possibly gather forces. However, it shows that was still a disaster as many thought that because he took the Queen with him he would not return and the source also says that many of the barons wanted to capture him and hand him over to the French King, suggesting that he had lost their support, which would make it much harder for him to regain the lands he had lost. This was written by a biographer of a supporter of John and would therefore be unlikely to be biased against John.

It can therefore be seen that the events suggest it was a disaster for John and the Sources also largely support this, particularly sources C and D.

Examiner commentary

The response does explain the views of the sources in relation to the issue in the question, but evaluation of the provenance is weak and partial, with only brief comments. The own knowledge is discrete and not linked to the sources or used to show whether the views in the sources are valid or not. The response attempts to answer the question, but it is not developed and the level evaluation means that the response would be on the cusp of a medium level answer.

Y104 England 1377-1455

Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that those involved in the Peasants Revolt wanted to overturn the established social order.

High level answer

At first sight it would appear that all the sources support the view that the Revolt wanted to overturn the established social order. All the sources put forward the view that the social order needs to be changed so that, according to A and B people are equal and 'recover liberty', whereas in sources C and D particular elements of the social order, such as the Archbishop are attacked. However, three of the four sources give only the views of John Ball and do not provide a view of the rest of the rebels.

Sources A and B are the most forceful in calling for the overthrow of the established social order, however both sources report only the view of John Ball and not the majority of the rebels. Source A clearly argues for changes to the social order so that 'everything shall be in common' and that there will 'be neither vassal nor lord, and all distinctions levelled'. Ball also draws attention to the conditions in which the wealthy lived compared to the majority of the peasantry to illustrate his argument that the social divisions were unjust. Although it is clear that he is calling for radical social change and that the account is written close to the time of his preaching, his words are from a Medieval French Chronicler who, despite claiming that Ball's words are recorded verbatim, was not present and would therefore be relying on other sources of information. Although Ball did attack the social order, these concerns were not the only ones of the rebels, who were more concerned by the level of taxation to fund the war against France and particularly resented the levying of the Poll Tax, which is not mentioned by Froissart. Source B, which is from a sermon delivered by Ball at Blackheath, probably during the revolt also reinforces the argument made in A that his aim was to overturn the social order as he claims that the time has come when 'ye may cast off the yoke of bondage' because they were suffering from the 'unjust oppression of naughty men' – those higher up in the social order. Ball is calling for, what he claims to be, a return to the situation during the early Biblical age when all were equal. However, as with A this is just the opinion of Ball and does not reflect the concerns of many of the peasants who were more concerned about the levels of taxation or labour duties they were having to perform or pay they were receiving after the Black Death. Not only that, Ball was also trying to rally the rebels at Blackheath and attempt to justify their actions, which were seen as treasonous and contrary to contemporary attitudes to royal authority, which was viewed as God-given.

Source C does not claim that the rebels wanted the complete overthrow of the social order, but instead reports Ball's attack on the Archbishop of Canterbury and one of the king's chief advisors, Simon Sudbury. Written by the Archbishop it reflects his anger with Ball for causing trouble, which did later result in a physical attack, and ultimately the death of the Archbishop and therefore is anxious to portray him as a liar and even a heretic who was 'putting about scandals concerning our own person'. Instead of reflecting the concerns of the rebels it is an attack by Sudbury on Ball and at best shows that Ball was attacking the clerical order and not the whole social order, as was the case in Sources A and B. The Church would have been concerned by Ball's attacks as they were part of the mechanism, which upheld the social order, but the source does not explain the views of most of the rebels, although their later actions against Sudbury show that he was unpopular.

Source D supports the view that many of the rebels were concerned about the social order as they 'considered that no name was more honourable than that of the community' and that there should be no lords in the future. However, the source does not suggest that the rebels called for the complete overthrow of the social order as it states that they still believed there should be a king. As with source C, this account is from members of the Church, which was hostile to the peasants as can be seen by the comment about the rebels' 'stupid estimation'. The source is also from St. Albans, which had seen some of the most serious unrest of the revolt, and written in the late fourteenth century was able to look back at the behaviour of the rebels at a time when the authorities were concerned about the power and threat of the peasantry after the population loss of the Black Death.

The Sources do not support the view that those involved in the revolt wanted to overturn the social order. Although two of the Sources claim that was the aim they refer only to John Ball's aim, and ignore the aims of the majority who took part. Source C is an attack on Ball by the Archbishop and again does not give an indication of the aims of most rebels and therefore only source D gives any indication of the views of the majority, but as that is a church-based account it should be treated with caution.

Examiner commentary

This is a very good response and is clearly focused on the demands of the question. The Sources are thoroughly analysed, their provenance is fully evaluated and own detailed knowledge is applied to all the sources. The comment about the sources providing only comment about the aims of the majority of the rebels is particularly pertinent and the knowledge about events at St Albans is beyond what would be expected. A clear judgement, which is supported by the rest of the response, is reached making the response worthy of a very high level.

Medium level answer

Source A strongly suggests that the rebels wanted to overturn the established social order as Froissart reports that Ball wants 'everything in common' and that 'there shall be neither vassal nor lord, and all distinctions levelled'. According to the account this message attracted large crowds to his preaching and could therefore be seen as being popular and a rebel aim as Ball reminded them of the conditions in which they lived and worked compared with their superiors. However, this was written by a French chronicler, and although he claims to be reporting Ball's words it is unlikely that they are accurate as he would not have heard them. He also describes Ball as a 'crazy priest' and therefore Ball's views may not reflect the reason why so many rose in rebellion.

Source B further supports the view that Ball wanted to overthrow the social order and as these are words from one of his sermons should reflect his views. In the sermon Ball objects to the bondage in which the peasants find themselves and claims that it 'came in by the unjust oppression of naughty men'. Ball calls for the peasants to reclaim their liberty, thus overturn the social order. However, this is from a sermon preached at Blackheath during the rising and so Ball would be rallying the peasants to face the royal forces and trying to justify their actions. It is also Ball's views of the situation and may not reflect the views of most of the peasants who could have risen for other reasons.

Source C is from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Simon Sudbury, but it makes little reference to Ball aiming to overthrow the social order, instead it focuses on the attack by Ball on Sudbury and other elements of the Church and is not such a direct attack on the social order as Sources A and B. However, as Sudbury is attempting to defend the Church from Ball's accusations he is bound to portray Ball and his comments in a bad light and this explains why he claims that Ball is 'ranting and telling lies about me'. The purpose of the source is to defend the Church and portray Ball in a negative light and this is made clear by Sudbury commenting that Ball 'used dreadful language such as shocked the ears of good Christians'. The source tells us how Sudbury attacked Ball, but gives little indication as to the aims of the Peasants.

Source D hints that the rebels wanted to change the social order as it talks about the 'community', however it also acknowledges that the rebels wanted to keep the king, so did not want a complete 'levelling'. However, as with source C, this was written by a member of the Church who, as part of the established social order, would not have wanted to see change, reflected in the comment about the rebels' 'stupid estimation' and would therefore oppose any attempt at change.

The Sources do suggest that there was some call for the overthrow of the existing social order, shown most clearly in Ball's preaching in Sources A and B. However, these two sources do not show the views of all the rebels. Sources C and D are both written by members of the Church, and C is written by the Archbishop to defend his own behaviour and therefore cannot be trusted as an accurate view, whilst source D is also in favour of the existing order as its preservation was in their interest, rendering it also unreliable as an explanation of the aims.

Examiner commentary

The four sources are considered and much of the material is linked to the issue in the question. The provenance of the Sources is considered, although in a number of instances the comments would benefit from further development. The conclusion is sound and based on the rest of the comments in the main body of the response. However, there is not attempt to apply own knowledge to the sources to test the validity of the views and it is accepted at face value that the aim was to overthrow the social order. The response would have been awarded a solid medium level.

Y105 Lancastrians, Yorkists and Henry VII England 1445-1509

Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that Henry VI was responsible for his own downfall.

High level answer

Most of the sources support the view that Henry was responsible, at least in some way, for his own downfall. The strongest argument put forward that Henry was responsible is in source D, which portrays him as a weak king who wasted large amounts of money, although it also suggests that his wife, Margaret of Anjou did not help the king's position. Sources A and C also suggest that to some extent Henry was responsible as he failed to appoint good advisors and failed to control the nobility. However, source B suggests that there was still some respect for Henry and therefore his downfall was due to other factors.

Source D offers a variety of reasons as to why Henry was to blame for his own downfall. Not only does the source argue that Henry was weak, accusing him of being 'child-like' but it also argues that he had allowed the Queen to dominate and 'ruled the realm as she liked'. In an age where power was heavily dependent upon money, the king was virtually bankrupt, and this was certainly true as he had given away a lot of crown land and had been forced to borrow money to fund the war in France, which had gone badly so that Henry was not 'able to maintain any wars', losing control of Normandy which lost him support from those nobles who had owned land in France. The source is therefore correct in commenting that taxes were 'spent in vain' as the war in France had been a series of losses culminating in defeat at Formigny and Castillon, whilst it might also be argued that money was wasted on building projects such as Kings College. However, it might be argued that the source should be treated with some caution as its comments on Margaret and the birth of her son are based on rumour and is therefore rather partisan in its comments.

The same could be argued of source C which suggests that Henry was to blame as he failed to control the noble rivalry between Somerset and York. The source puts forward the view that Somerset was able to influence the king and was able to persuade Henry that York 'had come to usurp the throne'. However, the source describes Somerset as 'evil' and York as 'noble' suggesting that its opinion should be treated with caution as it is very favourable towards York. The source is correct to note that the nobility had been able to raise armed forces and it could be argued that Henry should have stopped this, a further sign of his weakness. Although it could be argued that it was the ambition of the nobility that was the main reason as they were determined to control the king, with Somerset giving advice to the king, whilst York 'wished to depose the king and rule England himself'.

Source A offers a very similar view to source C in so far as it suggests that the king should have chosen better advisors, such as York, and chosen them from 'men of high rank', rather than listening to 'false traitors', such as Suffolk. It could be argued that Henry had allowed this situation to develop and that Cade's rebellion was a result of the death of Suffolk, who would have been butchered when the ship on which he was going into exile was captured. However, the source also shows that the struggle between the nobility for power and influence was a major factor and not just Henry's fault. Although the source is critical of Suffolk, it is taken from the manifesto of Cade's rebels who were sympathetic to 'the mighty prince' York, who they wanted to be the king's advisor and carry out the reforms they suggested in the manifesto and would therefore be critical of Suffolk. Therefore, although the source suggests that York was not to blame for the problems, he was ambitious and it could be argued that he wanted the throne, and there were certainly suggestions that this was his aim following his return from Ireland, suggesting that the source is not completely trustworthy in its explanation.

Source B puts forward an alternative view and argues that there was still support for the king as Thomas Yonge, who was critical of the king, was imprisoned in the Tower. This suggests that criticism of the king in parliament resulted in punishment and that the king was still respected enough for members to order the arrest of a fellow MP. Moreover, there is nothing in the nature of the source to suggest that it is doing anything other than recording events, which would suggest that if Henry still had support his fall was due to other factors.

Although the Sources do largely support the view that Henry's downfall was due to his own mistakes, the sources are somewhat partisan in their views, particularly in terms of their support for York and in their attack on Margaret of Anjou. Henry was certainly a factor in his own downfall as is shown in Sources A, C and D, but noble rivalry is also shown to be a factor in the same sources, suggesting that Henry's greatest problem was his failure to control the nobles.

Examiner commentary

This is well focused on Henry's responsibility and the sources are treated thoroughly. The provenance of all the sources is discussed and clearly linked to the issue in the question, whilst own knowledge is applied to the sources and used to evaluate them. A judgement about the sources and the extent to which they support the view is reached and is based on the arguments in the main body of the response.

Medium level answer

Source A, written by Cade's rebels, suggests that poor advisors were the main reason for the downfall of Henry VI. It suggests that 'those false traitors the Duke of Suffolk and his followers' were to blame and that the king needed to have men of high rank, like York as his advisors. However, it could also be argued that the source does suggest it was Henry's fault for not choosing better advisors. However, as the source is from the manifesto of the rebels it should be treated with caution as the rebels blamed the nobility for the problems and wanted York to resolve the problems and would therefore be critical of Suffolk.

Source B does not blame Henry, but instead shows that there was support for him in parliament as MPs were willing to commit York to the Tower for being critical of Henry. The Chronicle appears to be simply recording facts and might therefore be seen as impartial. It does not offer a view on either Henry or the nobility and their roles in the king's ultimate downfall so might be considered to be simply a report on events.

Source C blames both the king and the nobles, particularly Somerset, who is described as 'evil', whilst York is described as 'noble'. These comments suggest that the source is not impartial and is blaming Somerset for the problems and this is further developed in the source when it claims that it was Somerset who persuaded the king that York had come to take the throne as it fitted Somerset's plan to destroy the 'noble Duke of York'. However, although much of the emphasis in the source is on the role of Somerset in causing the problems and plotting to destroy York, who was his enemy, it can also be argued that it implies Henry should have prevented this from happening and not listened to advice from Somerset which was 'manifestly false'. Yet, the very partisan nature of the comments suggests that the views should be treated with caution, the source is very much in favour of York and highly critical of Somerset and should therefore be treated with caution in terms of its interpretation of events.

Source D is very critical of the king, but also of his wife. The source argues that the king is to blame for many of the problems as not only was he 'child-like', but was certainly very wasteful financially as he had given away 'all the possessions and lordships that belonged to the crown' so that he had nothing left and thus losing prestige and authority. It also suggests that his financial problems meant that he could no longer wage war, further weakening respect for him. However, according to the source it was also the Queen who was to blame as she had too much influence and that she had committed adultery. Although the source is quite contemporary to the events of Henry's fall, the argument about the Queen's adultery is based on rumour and this raises doubts about its impartiality.

The Sources do, at least in part suggest that Henry was to blame, although they also suggest that the greed and desire for power of the nobility, particularly Suffolk, Somerset and York were to blame. However, most of the sources have a partisan view and attempt to discredit either Henry, the Queen or members of the nobility and have to be treated with caution.

Examiner commentary

Although the response is focused on the actual issue in the question, the points made are not fully developed. The provenance of the sources is partially discussed, but would benefit from greater development. There is no real evidence of own knowledge being applied to the sources to test the validity of their views. As a result the response would be awarded a solid medium level.



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Telephone 01223 553998

Facsimile 01223 552627

Email general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

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