

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H105

For first teaching in 2015

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Version 1

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper Y143 series overview

Y143 is one of a number of British period study and Enquiry units. Each unit has two elements: a period study and an enquiry. The Enquiry element either precedes or continues the period study so as to provide increased coherence and coverage of the chosen period of British History. The Period study element of the component group is assessed by essays, with two set from different Key topics and candidates are required to answer one. In the Enquiry element candidates are required to critically use three sources. The first question requires candidates to consider the utility of one source in relation to an issue and the second question requires candidates to use all three sources in their historical context to assess the validity of a view. In both questions, candidates are required to explain the source or sources in relation to the question and apply both contextual knowledge and consider the provenance of the sources in order to reach a judgement based on the sources on the issue in the question.

Section A overview

The Enquiry section in this unit examines Churchill's diplomatic leadership during WW2 and in particular examines his relationship with the Soviet Union. The two questions require candidates to critically assess evidence and reach judgements. The critical evaluation of sources is the central theme in this section with all marks given against AO2.

Question 1

- 1 Use your knowledge of Churchill's policy towards Eastern Europe 1944–5 to assess how useful Source A is as evidence of Churchill's attitude towards the Soviet Union. [10]

Many candidates were able to explain how the source demonstrated that Churchill had some control over the shaping of post-war Eastern Europe. Some were able to use some contextual knowledge to support their explanation and could discuss the 'percentages agreement'. Fewer candidates mentioned the almost light-hearted decision that was taken at the meeting. Candidates were less convincing in their analysis of Churchill's attitude towards the Soviet Union and tended to argue more generally about relations between Stalin and Churchill. Many were also less certain on the provenance of the source and this led to stock comments about Churchill forgetting the details of the agreement as it was signed 10 years beforehand. The exemplar chosen here demonstrates both contextual knowledge and provenance being used to support the analysis in order to reach L4. Some of the comments on provenance are undeveloped hence the answer did not reach the top band.

Exemplar 1

It will be argued to a large extent that Source A is useful as of Churchill's attitude of the Soviet Union. This is because of the Percentages Agreement that Churchill and Stalin made in December 1944. However, it could be argued that the source is not useful because it does not mention the huge political differences between Britain and the Soviet Union, involving Churchill's hatred of communism.

Firstly, it will be argued that Source A is useful as evidence of Churchill's attitude towards the Soviet Union. This is mainly because of the 1944 Percentages Agreement. As stated in Source A, it is stated that

to Stalin could have 'ninety percent ^{of} dominance in Romania, for us to have ninety percent of the say in Greece, and go fifty-fifty on Yugoslavia'. As evidence, this is accurate because Churchill wanted to reduce the risk of conflict between Britain and the Soviet Union after the war was over. This highlights the source to be useful because it portrays that Churchill wanted to remain allied with Stalin and not go to war against them over communism. In terms of provenance, the source A comes was made by Churchill himself, suggesting that it will be reliable as he will have a first hand account of the private meeting he was part of. However, there is potential that Churchill may have exaggerated the events of the meeting as he knew his memoirs would be for public consumption, so may have wanted to make himself seem superior. Despite this, overall, source A is useful because it contains accurate evidence about what was agreed in the Percentages Agreement and conveys that Churchill wanted to remain at peace with the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, it could be argued that source A is potentially not useful as evidence of Churchill's attitude towards

the Soviet Union. This is because the source does not mention the differing views political views of Stalin and Churchill. Because the Soviet Union was communist, Churchill was ~~against~~ wanted to limit the amount of influence they would have over post-war Europe through the Percentages Agreement. This suggests that the source is not useful because one of the main reasons Churchill went through with the Percentage Agreement was to reduce the risk of countries falling to communism under Stalin, rather than to ~~make~~ keep the peace with him. In terms of provenance, the source was made in 1954, ten years after the Percentages Agreement occurred. This reduces the source's utility because Churchill may have forgotten parts of the event or left out important details.

In conclusion, Source A is useful to a large extent as evidence of Churchill's attitude towards Europe. This is because there is accurate information about the Percentages Agreement that portrays the relationship between Churchill and Stalin correctly, and has been made by ~~a~~ ^{the} reliable figure of Churchill.

Question 2

- 2 Using these three sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that Churchill was weak in his dealings with the Soviet Union in the years 1944–5. [20]

Most candidates found the question accessible and were able to produce a reasonably focused answer. In order to access the highest level on this question candidates need to explain the three sources in relation to the question, use both contextual knowledge and provenance and reach a judgement, in light of the evaluation, as to whether the sources support or challenge the view.

The three sources dealt with a number of views on Churchill's dealings with Stalin in the 'Percentages Agreement' and at Yalta. Most were able to demonstrate that A showed that Stalin was strong in his agreements with Stalin as he appeared to dictate the terms of the agreement. Many were able to point out that as this was written post-war there was an element of Churchill boasting that he was able to influence events, although there were some stock comments about him perhaps forgetting some details as he was writing much later. In B some candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the failure to support the pro-Western Polish government by allowing the Lublin Poles to take power. Most were able to make pertinent points about this source coming from a fellow Conservative, although fewer made much of McEwen being a former member of the armed forces. In C most candidates were able to point out that this was an attack on Churchill's view of the Russian occupation as an 'act of justice'. Some evaluated the comment as coming from a member of his own party, while others relied on evaluating the date of the comment with Douglas-Home recalling his comments much later. Contextual knowledge generally revolved around aspects of the Yalta agreement with some able to discuss the agreement on free elections. The best answers were able to explain the sources and evaluate using context and provenance but many candidates ignored provenance and were confined to Level 3 or below.

Exemplar 2 demonstrates a high level response where the candidate has used contextual knowledge and provenance skilfully to reach a supported judgement.

Exemplar 2

~~perhaps~~ The sources describe ~~in~~ the ~~debates~~ ~~the~~ dealings between Stalin and Churchill and the Soviet Union ~~in~~ from very different perspectives. Whilst Source A gives an ~~vi~~ impression of bold and decisive, British-led decisions, Sources C and B are more sceptical, implying that Churchill was subordinate in debates and weak-willed in the face of the USSR.

Source A describes, written by Churchill

and viewed by many as irresponsible. ~~They~~ Therefore, his whilst source A, ~~in does not~~ supports the view that Churchill had many dealings with Stalin, it is likely overly flattering.

Source B contrasts Source A dramatically. A Conservative MP McEwen ~~descri~~ stated in his ^a House of Commons speech that had Churchill acted differently at Yalta they would 'now have no cause to be ashamed.' This statement implies that Churchill's interactions with the Soviet Union were not only weak but 'shameful'. ~~This~~ The ~~same~~ source describes how Churchill's agreements went against '(his) own conscience'. By this point in the war, evidence of Stalin's disregard for ethical behaviour was beginning to ~~emerge~~ ^{clearly} emerge, with ~~incidence~~ ^{events} such as his execution of 22,000 Poles in 1943 being evident. Thus, it is reasonable to believe that source B would ~~not~~ be ~~of~~ reliable in stating that allowing Stalin control of Poland went against their 'conscience' as the ~~p~~-~~was~~ enemies to the USSR. They faced certain death. ~~Furthermore~~ Source ^{also} C 'support' the idea of the weak-willed

immorality of the agreements by saying that they 'repudiated any suggestion of it as an act of justice.' providing further evidence of public disgust at the apparent immorality of the agreement. ~~From source~~ The speech extract in source B, is dated at 1945 and so was directly after the event of Yalta, ~~from~~ and thus provides an immediate ~~and~~ ~~to~~ ~~off~~ opinion of matters from the time.

Despite this, the ~~source~~ speech would have been intended to persuade the other politicians to support the viewpoint and thus would likely have been one-sided and does not fully reflect Churchill's ~~own~~ strength in dealings with the USSR ~~as~~ as a whole - managing ~~to~~ to overlook his mistrust and hatred of communism for the sake of unity in a time of war. Nevertheless, at this particular conference, source B provides despite evidence to support ~~the~~ view that Churchill was weak in his dealings with the Soviet Union:

So similarly, source C provides ~~as~~ a view like that presented by source B. Source C also appears to ~~resent~~ resent Churchill's ~~view~~ apparent disregard of Stalin's ~~own~~ unethical behaviour, ~~even~~ with Douglas-Home saying ~~the~~ 'repudiated ~~the~~ any

suggestion of it as an act of justice?
Being ~~in~~ With the source being dated at 1974, Home Douglas-Home would have had the benefit of full ~~but~~ ^{perspective} ~~insight~~ of all of Stalin's atrocities ~~or~~ towards human life and thus could limit the reliability of the ~~or~~ source as it would be intended to place himself in a position of moral high ground. De ~~Home's~~ source B does improve the reliability, however, by providing a primary ~~account~~ display of apprehension towards Churchill's behaviour going against McEwen's 'own conscience'. Thus it is evident that ~~there~~ there was definite opposition to Churchill's agreements, ~~despite~~ ^{despite} implying ~~that~~ he was weak in failing to make moral dealings with the Soviet Union. Despite this, Home does refer to the

debate as 'tense' perhaps implying that despite ~~the~~ ~~outcome~~ the outcome of the dealings being weak, there was a degree of strength in Churchill's contention with the demands of the USSR.

In conclusion, it is clear that the majority of the sources lean towards the

view that Churchill was weak in his interactions with the Soviet Union. Despite his bold and dominant personality, the fact that Britain were of a lesser standing in the world than the USSR, (the 'senior' partner) and his apparent choice to overlook Stalin's immorality makes him ultimately weak, according to sources B and C especially.

Section B overview

Two essays are set, each from a different Key Topic. Here the candidates are asked to examine the key election of 1951 and the concept of decolonisation. The questions set require candidates to analyse causes and consequences of major historical issues.

Question 3

3* Assess the reasons why the Conservatives won the 1951 general election.

[20]

This was the most popular of the essay questions and was answered by the vast majority of candidates. It was generally well-answered as demonstrated in Exemplar 3 where the candidate displayed detailed knowledge and a consistent focus on the question to reach Level 5.

Most could examine a range of Conservative strengths, including Churchill's position as a war hero, Woolton's reorganisation of the party and the emergence of young MPs such as Maudling. Candidates were also able to discuss the campaign and Conservative promises of new homes, a reduction in rationing and lower taxes. This was generally balanced against good knowledge of Labour's weaknesses, including the unpopularity of rationing, splits over NHS charges, divisions over the Korean War and the Bevanite rebellion of 1950. The best answers were also able to discuss the impact of the first past the post system and show how this favoured the Conservatives in this election.

Many answers were well-balanced and contained a mixture of analysis and contextual support. Those in the highest levels came to a valid, supported judgement.

Exemplar 3

There are a number of relevant factors contributing to the success of the Conservatives in the election, with ~~part~~ such as their promising policies contrasting Labour's apparent failures; however, perhaps the most important was the ~~of~~ ~~maintain~~ electoral system in place in 1951.

The electoral system ~~is~~ ~~was~~ ~~highly~~ ~~highly~~ significant to the Conservative's success as, despite winning more seats overall, Labour had actually obtained

the Conservatives' promising new policies. At a time of severe economic austerity and ~~the~~ post-war, the Conservatives new policies promised a variety of tempting offers which the country lacked due to post-war shortages. The party itself had reorganised and ~~the~~ amended policies ~~in the post-war~~ whilst ~~Labour~~ ~~was~~ ~~in~~ ~~of~~ from 1945 to 1951 and ~~now~~ ~~she~~ was very prepared. The Conservatives now promised to build 300,000 houses per year, a very popular policy in a time of severe housing shortage after civilian bombings of the war, and also to provide the people with 'red meat' - another hugely tempting offer to the people who had become so apprehensive of towards the austerity of rationing, which had been in place for so long. Furthermore, the public had yet to thank Winston Churchill, the party leader for his war successes and, despite his him being 77 years old, he was an important figurehead for the party. Despite ~~this~~, the definite pull of the new policies, ~~they~~ their significance is somewhat diminished by the fact that Labour won more votes, and thus, it is clear that despite the policies being crucial to obtain support, the electoral system was more

important in defining the outcome of the result and allowing them success even though they won less votes.

A. In Ad addition, the decline in both ~~Labour~~ the oppo. Conservative's opposition ~~also provided~~ was also vital for their success in the 1951 election. The obvious opposition, Labour, was, as the immediate post-war government was quickly being associated with the ~~awful times of economic hardship~~ time of shortage, economic austerity and rationing ~~that had been~~ that ~~was~~ dominated the period post-war period in the eyes of the electorate. Furthermore, the a Conservatives had promised to continue their successful policies, such as the introduction of the welfare state on top of their other policies. Labour was also negatively associated with the controversial issue of ~~nationalisation~~ nationalisation, which the Conservatives appeared to be steering away from. Furthermore, the decline in the Liberal support aided the Conservative Party. The Liberal vote had fallen from 2.6 million ^{in 1945} to 730,566 in it by 1951, allowing the Conservatives to claim seats that

were more heavily contested by the Liberals in the 1991 earlier elections.

Again however, the placement of these votes was critical to the ~~process~~ outcome of the election, and thus the electoral system was ~~as~~ of greater significance ~~as~~ to the overall outcome.

In conclusion, it is clear that ~~the~~ ^{whilst} the ~~can~~ ~~not~~ refreshed and reorganised Conservative Party ^{needed} ~~wanted~~ their promising policies to obtain support and counter the austerity associated with Labour, the fact that Labour actually won more votes definitely adds ~~was~~ weight to the view that it was the electoral system that allowed the Conservatives to win the election and was ultimately the most significant factor determining the election's outcome.

Question 4

- 4* 'The most important reason for decolonisation was the impact of the Second World War.' How far do you agree? **[20]**

There were very few responses to this question. Candidates who did well on this question adopted a simple structure that compared the impact of the Second World War against other factors. In examining the impact of the Second World War, profitable approaches would have looked at the surrender in Singapore and its impact alongside the growth of nationalist movements and discontent in Britain's colonies as a result of fighting in the war. Answers which also examined Britain's attempts to exploit colonial economic resources were also credited. In arguing that decolonisation was in fact caused by other factors might have examined the impact of the Cold War on Britain's focus, Britain's weaker economic position after the war, the impact of the Suez Crisis and the problems of protest in places such as Kenya, Cyprus and Malaya.

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