

Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCE In History (8HI0) Paper 2A

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Introduction

It was pleasing to see candidates able to engage effectively across the ability range in this, the fourth year of the reformed AS Level Paper 2A which covers the options: Anglo-Saxon England and the Anglo-Norman Kingdom, c1053-1106 (2A.1), and England and the Angevin Empire in the reign of Henry II, 1154-1189 (2A.2). The paper is divided into two sections. Section A contains a compulsory two-part question for the option studied, each part based on one source. It assesses source analysis and evaluation skills (AO2). Section B comprises a choice of essays that assess understanding of the period in depth (AO1) by targeting five second order concepts – cause, consequence, change/continuity, similarity/difference and significance.

In common with the previous series, candidates found Section A more challenging than Section B. Some candidates were still not clear on what was meant by 'value' and 'weight' in the context of source analysis and evaluation. Performance in Section A was also affected by the absence of the detailed knowledge base required to add contextual material to support/challenge points derived from the sources. Most candidates did use their time effectively and, although a few responses were quite brief, there was little evidence on this paper of candidates having insufficient time to answer questions both sections. The ability range was diverse, but the design of the paper allowed all abilities to be catered for. Furthermore, in Section B, most responses had an analytical focus and there were very few that were wholly descriptive essays which were devoid of analysis and, for the most part, responses were soundly structured. The most common weakness in Section B essays was a lack of knowledge. It is important to realise that Section A and Section B questions may be set from any part of any Key Topic, and, as a result, full coverage of the specification is enormously important.

The candidates' performance on individual questions is considered in the next section.

8HI0_2A_Q01_a

Most candidates understood the question and were able to comprehend the source and comment on what it revealed about the authority of the king in the Anglo-Saxon legal system. A minority of candidates did not read the question carefully enough and confused it with the authority of the Norman kings. There were some well-focused responses that drew out inferences about the nature of the Anglo-Saxon kings' authority as the ultimate lawgiver and financial benefits that the Anglo-Saxon king could draw from the legal system. The best answers developed the inferences with well-selected context to establish their validity. Candidates would do well to remember that contextual knowledge does need to be used to explain and develop the inferences drawn from the source and not just to provide free-standing knowledge. Many candidates did not use any contextual knowledge and this did depress their achievement within the levels. Some candidates were able to use the attributes of the source effectively to develop their ideas about the value of the Domesday Book to historians, with a particular focus on its need for accuracy. Those candidates who discussed the limitations could not be rewarded for that part of their answer as it is not the focus of part a responses.

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Examiner Comment

This is a L3 response. It has strong inferences supported from the source and developed from the candidate's knowledge. There is secure evaluation of the source with a focus on value.

Examiner Tip

Remember to use contextual knowledge to develop and explain inferences

8HI0_2A_Q01_b

Candidates understood the source material and were able to select from it to develop some inferences about William's preparations for the invasion of England. There were some effective answers that weighed up the strengths and limitations of the source and used this as a basis to reach a judgement about the weight that should be attached to the source for the enquiry. Many candidates still approach the consideration of weight by writing about adding and subtracting weight rather than considering the strengths and weaknesses of the source material and then reaching a judgement about the weight that the source would bear in an enquiry. Although many candidates were able to use their contextual knowledge to interrogate the source, there were a considerable number that attached free standing knowledge about William's claim to the throne or his battle tactics which was not focused on the enquiry and did not satisfy the criteria in the higher levels of the mark scheme.

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Examiner Comment

This is a L4 response. It has strong inferences supported from the source and developed from the candidate's knowledge. There is secure evaluation of the source. The consideration of the weight that the source bears is very effective.

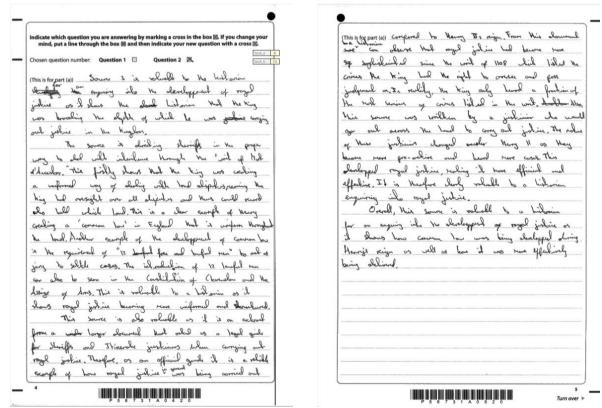
Examiner Tip

Remember to use the evidence in the source to justify comments on reliability

8HI0_2A_Q02a

Candidates were able to understand the source and the focus of the question on development of royal justice under Henry II. The most effective responses developed inferences from the source material and integrated the source with their knowledge of development of royal justice. Many candidates did not pay sufficient attention to the source material and drove their answer from knowledge, which, in some cases, lacked focus on 'royal authority' and discussed the role of officials such as the sheriff in local justice. This does not score highly in Section A. Some candidates focused their response on what was missing from the source or on perceived biases in the source which does not address the focus of 'value'. While there were some valid comments made on value, very few candidates picked up on the value of a 'legal textbook'.

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Examiner Comment

This is a strong Level 3 response. It develops a number of inferences and uses contextual knowledge really well to explain the value. The evaluation of the source as an official guide and comments on its reliability are very well explained.

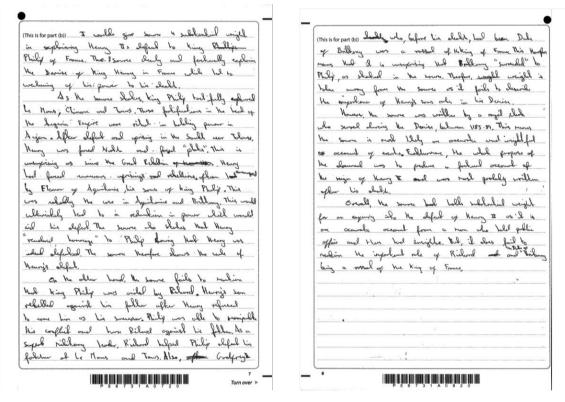
Examiner Tip

Always develop and support inferences with evidence from the source.

8HI0_2A_Q02b

There were some good responses to this question in which candidates made effective use of the source and were able to develop valid reasons for attributing weight to it. A significant number of candidates focused their evaluation on the failure of the chronicler to comment on the role of Duke Richard in the defeat of his father. A focus on omission is not usually a successful way of approaching source evaluation. However, in this case, given the title of the chronicle, it could have been made highly relevant. It was a pity that candidates did not make use of this to validate and strengthen their argument.

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Examiner Comment

This is a level 4 response. The candidate develops a series of inferences that are carefully reasoned with clear explanations. Contextual knowledge is deployed to discuss the claims in the source, e.g. on the first page of the answer where the candidate refers to Philip 'tactfully' exploring Le Mans, Chinon and Tours and examines this in the light of the strategic importance of these in the Angevin Empire. There is an excellent inference on the scale of Henry's defeat. The evaluation of the source includes a consideration of the omission of

Henry's sons from the account. There is some justification by liking this to Brittany's surrender.

Examiner Tip

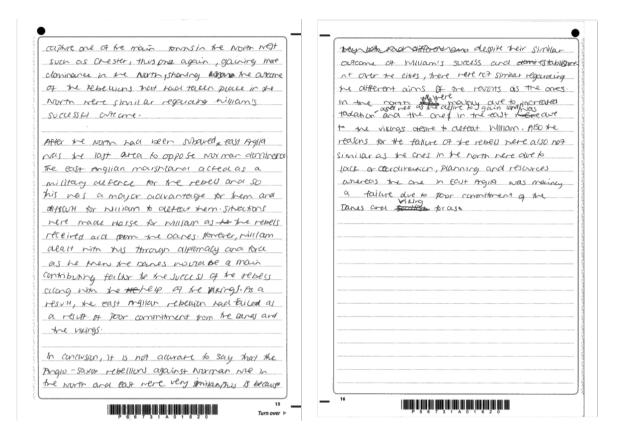
Contextual knowledge should be used to show an awareness of the values of the society from which the sorce is drawn 8HI0_1H_Q04

8HI0_2A_Q03

A small number of candidates answered this question with most scoring in levels 2 and 3. Most candidates had some knowledge of the rebellions but struggled to focus on the two rebellions specified in the question and further struggled to carry out a comparison of the similarities and differences of them. In some cases, candidates confused the rebellions with others which took place in the decade after William's victory at Hastings. Consequently supporting evidence lacked the accuracy and precision that facilitates achievement at the higher levels.

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Examiner Comment

This is a low level 3 response. Its initial focus on the rebellion in the south west is not relevant to the question. However, there is some accurate knowledge developed on the northern rebellion and on the rebellion in East Anglia. The comparisons in the body of the answer are not valid because they are compared against rebellions outside of the remit of the question but there are some relevant criteria developed in the conclusion that pushes this response into level 3.

Examiner Tip

In similarity and difference questions, a brief plan helps you to focus on the second order concept.

8HI0_2A_Q04

There were only a small number of responses to this question. Candidates tended to vary from those who knew the topic well and developed focused answers supported by secure knowledge, to those with very little knowledge who were unable to develop a relevant and supported response. Those candidates were able to refer to a range of reform an introduced by Lanfranc, including tacking clerical abuses, the establishment of the primacy of Canterbury and the establishment of clerical courts. Candidates who were able to assess the success of these measures and reach a judgement accessed level 4.

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Examiner Comment

This is a very well-focused response that achieved level 4. There is a very clear focus on Lanfranc's successes in removing corruption and reorganising the church. This is contrasted with failures. The candidate has selected effective criteria to use for reaching a judgement.

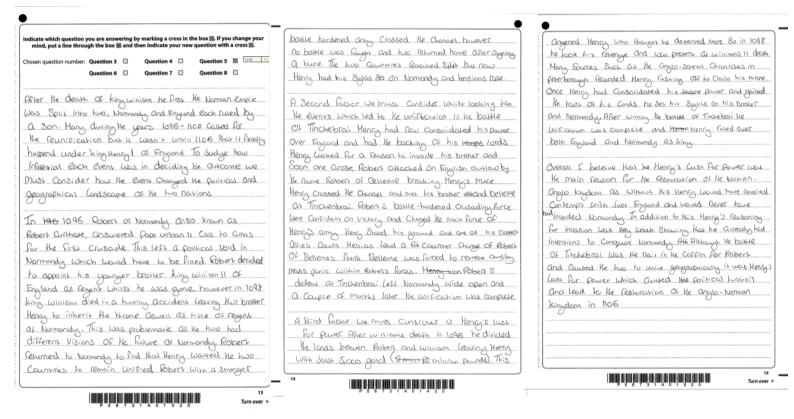
Examiner Tip

This question focuses on consequence. To address it, you need to look at impact.

8HI0_2A_Q05

This was the most popular question in Section B for 2A.1. The majority of candidates achieved in level 3. Most candidates displayed some knowledge of the topic and were able to construct the answer to focus on causation. Most candidates referred to William II's control of Normandy in Robert's absence, the attitude of the Anglo-Norman barons to the restoration of the Anglo-Norman kingdom, Henry I's ambitions, Robert's misrule in Normandy and the Battel of Tinchebrai. Candidates who were able to develop and support valid criteria for judgement were able to access level 4.

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Examiner Comment

This is a mid-level 3 response. The candidate has developed the answer using relevant material within a narrative framework. The range of factors considered is reasonable. The answer would have accessed level 4 if there was more analysis and explanation and less description.

Examiner Tip

Remember to explore the given factor in depth.

8HI0_2A_Q06

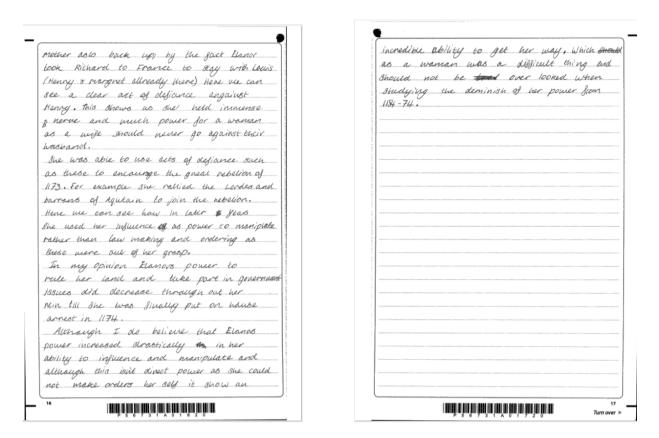
A small number of candidates addressed this question. Most scored at the top of level 2 and into level 3. Candidates were able to describe the role of the chancellor and contrast it against the role of other significant individuals. Some candidates contrasted the chancellor with the role of Eleanor. This lacked validity because Eleanor was not an official in Henry's government.

8HI0_2A_Q07

This question prompted a number of effective responses. Most candidates demonstrated some knowledge of Eleanor's role during this period and the best responses were able to consider the extent to which her power declined by examining the evidence for and against the proposal. Most candidates compared her control in Aquitaine with Henry's control and considered her role as a wife and mother alongside her ambitions to rule in Aquitaine. The best responses established clear criteria for judgement

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Examiner Comment

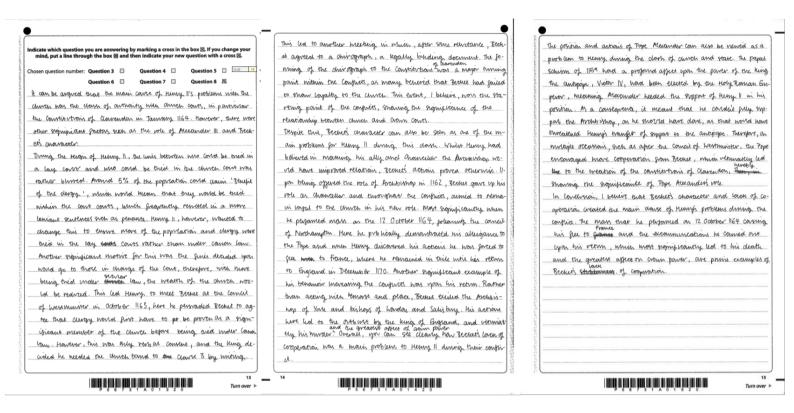
This is a secure level 4 response with a strong argument and counter argument. There is a good range of factors and sufficient support to achieve this level.

Examiner Tip

This question focuses on significance. To address it effectively, you need to establish criteria for judgement.

8HI0_2A_Q08

This was the most popular question that was answered on the paper. Most candidates scored in level 3 and a good number were able to access level 4. Candidates' knowledge of the topic was good and most had an explicit focus on church courts and on causation. The best responses moved from suggesting that all factors contributed to the problems to having clear criteria for judgment and in contrasting the problems caused by church courts with alternative reasons and coming to a judgement on which as most important.



Examiner Comment

This is a level 4 response. It has an explicit focus on the question and explores 3 factors before reaching a supported judgement in relation to the question.

Examiner Tip

This is a causation question. Remember to compare the given cause to alternative reasons in order to reach a judgment on 'main cause'.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

Section A

Value of Source Question (1(a)/2(a))

• Candidates must be more prepared to make valid inferences rather than to paraphrase the source

• Be prepared to back up inferences by adding additional contextual knowledge from beyond the source

• Move beyond stereotypical approaches to the nature/purpose and authorship of the source e.g. look at the specific stance and/or purpose of the writer

• Avoid writing about the deficiencies of the source when assessing its value to the enquiry.

Weight of Source Question (1(b)/2(b))

• Candidates should be prepared to assess the weight of the source for an enquiry by being aware that the author is writing for a specific audience. Be aware of the values and concerns of that audience.

• In assessing weight, it is perfectly permissible to use contextual knowledge to support/challenge statements and claims made in the source

• Try to distinguish between fact and opinion by using your contextual knowledge of the period

• In coming to a judgement about the nature/purpose of the source, take account of the weight you may be able to give to the author's evidence in the light of his or her stance and/or purpose

• In assessing weight, it is perfectly permissible to assess reliability by considering what has been perhaps deliberately omitted from the source. However, simply stating that a source is limited because it does not cover certain events or developments does not establish weight since no source can be comprehensive.

Section **B**

Essay questions

• Candidates must provide more factual details as evidence. Weaker responses lacked depth and sometimes range

• Take a few minutes to plan your answer before you begin to write your response

• Pick out three or four key themes and then provide an analysis of (for e.g.) the target significance mentioned in the question, setting its importance against other themes rather than providing a description of each

• Pay more careful attention to key phrases in the question when analysing and use them throughout the essay to prevent deviation from the central issues and concepts

• Try to explore links between issues to make the structure flow more logically and the arguments more integrated.