



History

Paper 1C (AS) Specimen Question Paper

Question 01 Student 1

Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.1 20/08/15

Specimen Answer plus commentary

The following student response is intended to illustrate approaches to assessment. This response has not been completed under timed examination conditions. It is not intended to be viewed as a 'model' answer and the marking has not been subject to the usual standardisation process.

Paper 1C (AS): Specimen question paper

01 With reference to these extracts and your understanding of the historical context, which of these two extracts provides the more convincing interpretation of the effectiveness of Wolsey as the King's principal minister?

(25 marks)

Student Response

While both extracts appear to give good interpretations of Wolsey, it seems that Extract A gives the most convincing interpretation.

I think this because it references the factors that remained out of Wolsey's control at the time of his fall, which ultimately led to his fall. The extract mentions "there was little Wolsey could've done to prevent Charles V's triumph in Italy". This, to a large extent, appears to be true. When Charles V won the Battle of Pavia in 1525, Wolsey had previously made all arrangements that this victory would benefit England at Bruges in 1521. Wolsey and Charles had agreed that Princess Mary would marry Charles and that Charles would give Henry the throne of France. This was not adhered to, leaving Wolsey's policy to fail. The will of Charles and his sweeping victories against France were firmly out of Wolsey's control, meaning that the extract is providing an accurate interpretation of Wolsey.

I also think that this interpretation of Wolsey given in Extract A is accurate because it mentions how it was almost impossible for him to "secure Henry's divorce". This is arguably very true. In 1527 Charles V, the nephew of Catherine of Aragon (the wife Henry wanted to divorce) sacked Rome and was holding the pope effectively hostage. This meant under the circumstances it was almost impossible for Wolsey to get the divorce a hearing let alone make it happen. Also, the hostile court had allied with Catherine against Wolsey, making the job even harder. This means that it was hard for Wolsey to secure the divorce, meaning that the interpretation given by Extract A is accurate.

However, it could be argued that the source isn't accurate in its interpretation in that it could be seen that many of Wolsey's "foreign policy" failures were his own fault. For example, the unreasonable Amicable Grant in 1525 led 10,000 people to launch a rebellion against him as the terms were unfair and bypassed parliament. This means that some of his foreign policy failures were his own fault, not the fault of circumstance. This could also be seen by the Ladies' Peace of 1529 between Francis Valois and Charles V that left England diplomatically isolated and the disastrous trade embargo of 1528. All these ideas show that Wolsey's policy failures were in fact his own fault and not things out of his own hands. Meaning that Extract A may not be providing a convincing interpretation of Wolsey.

Extract A also describes Wolsey as "efficient". It could be argued through the 1526 Eltham Ordinances that this was not the case, as in order to hold onto power and keep his influence over Henry, Wolsey was willing to reform the running of court to make it less "efficient", by forcing two men to be with Henry at all times and changing the counsel meeting times. This means Extract A may not provide a convincing interpretation as it could be argued that when it came down to it, Wolsey would choose power over efficiency.

On the other hand, though, it could be argued that Extract B provides the most convincing interpretation of Wolsey's effectiveness.

Extract B describes Wolsey as "ruthless", which could be seen through his rise to power. In 1511 Wolsey was happy to abandon his beliefs and friends (such as Richard Fox) to join the pro-war faction in order to gain favour with the King and rise higher within court. Also, in 1521 Wolsey was willing to convince Henry to execute Henry Stafford, an opponent of Wolsey, for no real reason other than the fact that Henry Stafford did oppose him. This means that source B does provide a convincing interpretation of Wolsey's effectiveness because there is plenty of evidence for Wolsey being "ruthless".

Extract B is also proving a convincing interpretation when it speaks about Wolsey's creation of a "tremendous central authority". This can be evidenced through many of Wolsey's reforms, such as convincing JPs to swear fealty to the king. He also made his dependents commissioners and, from around 1522, began sending them out to local governments to keep the King's laws and peace and generally to represent the King around the country. This means that Source B is providing a convincing interpretation as it effectively mentions Wolsey's achievements in creating a central government.

However, it could be argued that Extract B is not providing a convincing interpretation of Wolsey because it claims that Wolsey made "his country famous abroad". However, it could be argued that throughout Henry's reign and Wolsey's time as Chief Minister, England remained a third wheel within Europe, or lower in the hierarchy than that. England was often overlooked or left out, including with the previously mentioned Ladies' Peace of 1529. This means that Extract B isn't an accurate portrayal of Wolsey because it doesn't present Wolsey's failure.

Finally, it could be argued that Extract B isn't an accurate portrayal of Wolsey because it dismisses the idea of "interference of abroad". Throughout Wolsey's time there was much interference from foreign powers like Ferdinand of Spain, who directed Henry's 1512 invasion of France, causing him to take places like Tournai which had no advantage to England but advantages to Spain. This means that Wolsey was not as effective as Extract B claimed because of reasons mentioned above, such as interference aboard.

Overall, it appears Extract A is more accurate because it presents Wolsey more accurately and insightfully than Extract B which has many oversights.

Commentary – Level 4

The answer is generally effective in approach, in that it seeks to both corroborate and challenge the arguments in each extract and reach a conclusion as to which is the more convincing, although the conclusion is assertive. It is more effective in its treatment of Extract B, where the knowledge cited is more relevant and appropriate. In its treatment of Extract A, it occasionally confuses domestic and foreign policies. The answer tends to select arguments which are more easily challenged and corroborated, but does not provide a clear understanding of the overall arguments in each extract. This is a borderline Level 3/4 response but has the qualities of a low Level 4 overall.