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History

Paper 1D (AS) Specimen Question Paper

Question 01 Student 2

Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.0 11/11/15

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## 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 1D (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 James' court?

[25 marks]

### Student response

Extract A suggests that James's court was corrupt and disastrous. It says it was 'drunken, promiscuous, and wasteful, reflecting the worst failings of James 1st himself'. James became king of England at 37. At English court his presence was always commented on yet sometimes was criticised. James was often known as a guy who liked to party however most people at court admired him for this. He was also known to be having sexual relationships with the Duke of Buckingham; although most people didn't take notice of this since he was already married to his wife Anne of Denmark and had two heirs to the throne some would have found it morally unacceptable as most views around that time were against homosexuality.

There were also those who would criticise James's extravagance however his biggest critics was Salisbury and Cranfield. Surprisingly Salisbury and Cranfield used to be James's favourites and James used to show his appreciation towards them by giving them large sums of money. However this all changed when James started spending much of his wealth on his own people the Scottish which of course angered Cranfield and Salisbury and made them particularly jealous and critics of James's rule.

Some English men would often think James was rude or vulgar at court but this was understandable since James was from Scotland and many people English men probably weren't used to his Scottish personality. Despite all this extract A does also talk about the positive side of King James's court, describing it as a 'literary court which patronized major writers' talking about major writer's king James's court inspired a much well known famous writer to this day. Shakespeare. Shakespeare made a lot of his earnings due to James's love for plays and literary.

From extract B I can infer that it describes James's court in a more positive light unlike extract A. It states that 'James's outgoing nature led him to participate fully in court life' James believed in the idea of authority and the authority of a king was very dear to him, so he often showed his ideology by having expensive lavish parties and balls at court to show his power and showing off his authority he had as the king of England. The extract also says 'James's court acted positively as a nerve centre of political activity' from my own knowledge One of James's first acts of foreign policy after he became king was to end the long war with Spain, which had continued for 20 years, resulting in the Treaty of London which was largely favourable to Spain, but was also an acknowledgement to the Spanish that their hopes of bringing England under Spanish control were over. The end of the war greatly eased the English governments near bankrupt financial state and England and Spain were at peace for the next 50 years.

James's intake on his job as king was that he was God's deputy and that he ruled by divine right as the absolute sovereign power in England. In England the idea of law was very different in the outside world for example if a ruler made a law it was a law however kingship in England existed under the law and James simply didn't understand that ideology since he believed being king made him above the law which could suggest why some criticised him as a leader. The extract says 'scandals involving people so closely connected to the king were bound to bring the court into disrepute' During the time of James's rule there were many scandals based in the centre of the James's court the most famous scandal being the Robert Carr scandal who was closely connected to the king which probably disgraced the monarch in the eyes of the public. Yet despite these negative sides of James, he was known as a generous leader who always rewarded those close to him and also spending large amounts of money on Scotland from time to time which is supported in the extract when it states about 'James's generous nature'.

In conclusion I believe that extract B gives a more convincing interpretation of James's court. This is due to the fact that it is far more descriptive than extract A. It describes his court in both a positive and negative way unlike extract A which mainly describes only the negative views of the court and states that the only positive thing about it was inspiring major writers and so it doesn't give me much to infer from it except the negativity of James's court. Source B however gives me much more variety explaining both positive and negative views giving me much more to infer and with the help of my own knowledge a much wider understanding of James's court. It's also much more convincing than extract A because extract A only highlights the negatives and the failings of James at court however extract B highlights his success and his failings instead of only focusing on one of them.

#### **Commentary – Borderline Level 3/4**

The answer does offer a conclusion, with reasons, as to which is the more convincing interpretation of the two extracts and there is extensive deployment of knowledge of context, albeit not always fully accurate and, more importantly, relevant. The latter is the major weakness of the response. Students are expected to deploy knowledge of context, but in order to substantiate comments about aspects of interpretation and how this knowledge supports or challenges the interpretation. The answer does not do this consistently, and it is difficult to see how the achievement of peace with Spain actually supports anything of relevance to the interpretations. With closer links between the interpretations and the deployment of knowledge, this could have been an effective response, but the links are not consistently established. The answer is vague in places, with references to 'some people' appearing often.

Given a convincing argument as to which extract is the more valid and the effective deployment of knowledge of context in places, the answer has strengths, but is limited for the reasons set out above. It is borderline L3/4.