



History

Paper 1K (AS) Specimen Question Paper

Question 01 Student 3

Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.0 26/02/16

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 1K (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 rise of American power in the early 20th century?

[25 marks]

Student response

The two extracts both talk about similar themes but have different views about them. Extract A says the USA was one of the greatest world powers, while Extract B says the USA wasn't really a world power because of its weak military power. Extract A is also saying that president Roosevelt was the greatest imperialist president while extract B is saying Roosevelt was actually limited by the military so was not really the greatest.

Extract A says the USA "was one of the Great Powers of the world". This is relatively true, because in the early 20th century there had been a lot of expansionism going on. The USA began to move further west, when they realized it had come to an end they decided to move further, the USA found Hawaii. Since 1875, the USA had imported Hawaiian sugar free of duty in return for Hawaiian government refusing concessions such as the importation of manufactured goods to other countries. Hawaii was effectively reliant on the US. In 1898 Hawaii was annexed. Hawaii was an important stopping station on the way to Japan and China. By the 1890's there were 3,000 American sugar growers out of the 90,000 Hawaiians living on the island. In 1887, the USA established its first major pacific naval base at Pearl Harbour, because of such economic investment in Hawaii, the USA annexed it in July 1898.

The USA also felt that they were to "civilize" the "uncivilised" countries. The uncivilised countries were most countries that weren't America. When the USA purchased the Philippines for \$20 million, they saw it as helping them to become better. The USA were able to get colonies in Latin America very easily, they got Puerto Rick, Venezuela, Samoa, the Philippines and more. This showed that they were a world power because they had such a massive influence on Latin America.

However, Extract B argues that "world diplomacy was limited by Americas lack of military power and by the unwillingness of the American people to make sacrifices to back up a large American foreign policy". Extract B is saying that America is not a world power, they just aren't strong enough. It was seen that a nation without a navy could make little headway in world affairs in an age of sea power. America's navy was small at the time and was seen as not very effective. The 1893 depression also made the USA look economically weak, and a country with a weak economy, can certainly not have influence over other countries. There was a stock market crash, with 15,000 companies and 600 being closed with the national unemployment rate approaching 20%. Lastly, the countries in which the USA got were very tiny and weak countries such as Samoa, Hawaii and Guam, unlike Britain who had massive colonies in Africa and India. All these factors made the USA look weak and not exactly a world power. The Anti-Imperialist league set up in 1898, opposed expansion and believed that imperialism violated against the fundamental principle that government must derive from "consent of

the governed” as in people should choose who governs them rather than having this decided for them.

Extract B is more convincing because although the USA was able to get colonies, they were small and their small navy could handle them, as opposed to getting China. They were too weak to be able to, and the economic depression just made them look less of a world power.

Secondly, Extract A is saying “It was under President Theodore Roosevelt that the imperial greatness of the United States was most effectively trumpeted”. Roosevelt was able to build the Panama Canal. This canal connected the Atlantic and Pacific, as the journey round the tip of South America was long and dangerous. In the 1860’s, the US secretary of state William Seward had tried to build this canal but senate said no. In 1881, a French company, under the French engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps, tried but were unable to build it because of financial issues. But Roosevelt came along and achieved it. The only way Roosevelt could get this canal was by creating a new country, Panama, as the USA did not want to pay Columbia \$25 million. In 1903, Panamanians revolted against Columbia and the USA joined them in these revolts and Panama gained its independence. Panama offered the USA a \$10 million deal and the US accepted and in 1914 was completed. Roosevelt also amended the Monroe Doctrine, creating the Roosevelt corollary which sanctioned US armed intervention in Latin America when it felt necessary.

Commentary – Level 3

There is much contextual information which is largely accurate and appropriate and occasionally used to assess how far an Extract’s view is convincing or not. At times, for example in relation to the Panama canal, there is too much description and narrative. The answer lacks range in its interrogation of the interpretations; for example, there is no reference to Monroe in the assessment of Extract A and there is a tendency to identify an isolated phrase and then interrogate this in detail. Critically, there is no conclusion identifying which Extract and why is the more convincing and this is a modest level 3 answer.