



History

Paper 2E (AS) Specimen Question Paper

Question 01 Student 2

Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.0 18/03/16

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 2E (AS): Specimen question paper

01 With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, which of these two sources is more valuable in explaining why there was a breakdown between Crown and Parliament by 1629?

[25 marks]

Student response

Source A is more valuable in explaining why there was a breakdown between the crown and parliament as it has a more reliable provenance and fewer omissions than Source B.

Source A is saying that the only resentment which occurred due to the forced loan was the petition of right which did not threaten the crown, but that the forced loan was unfair and caused tensions.

The provenance of Source A is reliable as it was written by Clarendon. He used to be a critic of the King but became a Royalist in 1641 when he believed his opponents were going too far. Despite supporting the King, he still believed that the King made mistakes so he had a more objective view of the King meaning his memoirs will be more objective and therefore valuable in explaining why relationships between parliament and the crown broke down.

Clarendon is describing the events of the forced loan and the Fire Knights case – where five of the seventy six knights who were arrested for not paying the forced loan went to court to protest. Clarendon describes these gentlemen to be of “prime quality” suggesting he disagreed with their imprisonment. Whilst this may be a suggestion of bias it also shows how parliament felt at the time (especially as Clarendon was an MP at this point). This is valuable as it implies that Parliament believed it was unfair that these gentlemen were imprisoned and shows a reason why their relationship with the King broke down – he was acting in an unfair, tyrannical manner.

Clarendon describes The Petition of Right as being “no threat to the crown”. This is true as, whilst the original petition made no mention of his royal prerogative, Charles only agreed to sign the one which allowed him to claim royal prerogative. This shows that he was able to be absolutist and change Parliaments wishes as he chooses therefore showing another reason why the relationship between the King and Parliament broke down.

However, the source is limited as there are some omissions. Clarendon only describes one reason for the breakdown of the relationships between King and Parliament when there were many more reasons such as Tonnage and Poundage were Charles levied the tax against parliament's wishes. There was also Buckingham who caused tensions as he had a lot of patronage and titles in addition to blocking access to the Kings ear. These omissions make the source less valuable as there were many other factors involved besides this one case.

Source B claims that Charles is ending parliament due to their attempts to “extend their privileges”. The source was said by Charles I – this provenance makes the source unreliable. Because it was said by Charles, there would be definite bias as he is unlikely to believe that the breakdown of the relationship was his fault – this is shown by how, in the source, he only blames parliament.

Despite this, it is still slightly valuable as it shows how Charles felt towards parliament at the time. Compared with Source A, however, it is less valuable as Source A has a clearly more objective provenance which means it is more valuable in understanding what was really going on and how parliament felt.

The source contains some omissions which make it less reliable. The first is that Charles states that parliament was trying to “extend their privileges”. This is slightly true as they did only allow the King one years worth of Tonnage and Poundage which was arguably the Kings right to collect. However, overall, it was the King trying to suppress their privileges. For example, he sent the Earl of Arundel to the tower and also Sir Dudley Diggs and Sir John Eliot when they tried to impeach Buckingham in 1626. Although Charles freed them once Parliament protested it was still an attack on their privileges. This does make the source slightly valuable as it does show why Charles was against the current parliament it fails to be more objective as shown by this omission.

Another omission is make as Charles says that his only reason for him dissolving parliament was parliament “setting up general committees” and that there were “so many” set up which was making parliament inefficient. This is true and Charles did spend a lot of time during the personal rule making local governments more efficient especially by making enforcement officers and churches more accountable. However, he had more grievances with parliament as he disliked their attempts to impeach Buckingham and he was offended by the rejoicing of MPs once Buckingham was assassinated in 1628 – Thomas Felton (the assassin) said he did it for the country which caused tensions between Charles and parliament. He also omits any of his faults which may have caused a breakdown in their relationship such as Tonnage and Poundage and the Forced Loan. This makes the source invaluable as it is very one sided.

Whilst Source A does make omissions, they do not cause the source to be more biased towards a particular viewpoint. Source B also has more omissions than Source A which makes Source A more valuable.

Overall, I believe Source A to be more valuable in explaining why the relationship between the crown and Parliament broke down as it contains fewer omissions and is a more balanced viewpoint. Source B is still slightly valuable in giving Charles’ viewpoint on why he had grievances with Parliament.

The source is reliable, and therefore more valuable as I can back it up with my own knowledge

Commentary – Borderline Level 3/4

The answer attempts to assess how provenance and content of each source adds, or detracts from value. It is more effective, although not wholly convincing, in assessing the significance of Clarendon as an author than Charles. The comments on the provenance of Source B is simplistic and dismissive and misses the point that it is a declaration; that is, a considered view. The context is clearly understood, but the comments on the Petition of Right lack clarity and precision. Whilst it may be appropriate to indicate omission, it is more important to interrogate what is in the sources and the assessment of Source B is largely based on omission rather than what is actually being claimed. In general, the understanding of Source B is not secure and this makes this a borderline Level 3/4 answer.