



History 7042
Specimen Question Paper 1F (A-level)
Question 01 Student 1
Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.0

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 1F (A-level): Specimen question paper

01 Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these three extracts are in relation to the reasons for working-class agitation and protest in the early 19th century.

[30 marks]

Student response

The arguments in these three extracts are very convincing in relation to the reason for working class agitation and protest because they all show that the working class suffered in the early 19th century because of the massive amount of industrialisation that was going on at this time. They all talk about the high price of food and I know that working people lived on very poor food. Starvation was not uncommon and when people were hungry they were more inclined to join mass protest movements. These extracts also talk about how the ordinary working people had no say in politics. Until 1832 parliament was completely dominated by the upper class and even after this the vote only went to the middle classes, not the workers, so it is hardly surprising that the working people felt hard done by and became involved in marches and riots.

In the first Extract A, it makes a link between the economy and popular protest. It also points out that different groups of workers reacted differently. For the handloom weavers, whose jobs were being gradually wiped out because of the spread of Arkwright's water-frame which could only operate in big mills, protest was 'the only alternative to slow starvation'. This extract also refers to the Luddites who were machine-breakers that met secretly at night. They followed Ned Ludd and went around smashing the machines that they believed had put men out of work and were responsible for their starvation. The other sufferers referred to here are the Stockingers, who were workers mainly from Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire who made stockings on frames under the domestic system and whose lives were badly affected by the coming of industrialisation. The Blanketeers were workers in the woollen and textile industries that were the first to be mechanised. All of these groups were protesting against the coming of the factory system. The 'charge of the yeomanry at St Peter's fields' refers to the Peterloo massacre when workers who had gone along for a day out to hear Henry Hunt talking about reform, were struck down by soldiers carrying sabres. All of these protests occurred because of economic distress. This is a very convincing argument.

Extract B says that those involved in protests thought that landowners and JPs would support them. Workers didn't have much education at this time and it is likely they misunderstood the attitudes of the upper classes. It says that 'common folk' couldn't express protest in voting because they didn't have the right to vote, which is true. It also says that they couldn't use the law either because this was operated by the 'ruling groups'. This is a convincing argument because the working class had very few rights and had to obey the upper classes to keep their jobs. This extract says that protests were caused by 'deep social changes' and were not simply spontaneous outbreaks in response to hunger. This is totally different from Extract A which says that it was the starvation that caused protest. Perhaps it would be fairer to argue that there were

deep social changes but it was hunger that actually made the working people do something about these. This extract is therefore not quite as convincing as the first one.

Extract C says that the 'journeyman cotton spinner' who would be a member of the working class disliked his masters. This was because he blamed them for not giving him political rights and for cutting his wages. He accuses them of taking the food. This extract says that 'a particular system of ownership and power' was responsible for workers' hardship. I know this to be true because the factory masters could demand long hours for low pay. There was no proper regulation of factories before 1833 and even then it was very limited because the government believed in laissez-faire. The factory owners exploited workers' families, employing children for pitiful wages and treating them very harshly with the overseers' strap and women were badly used too. Workers often had to live in slum accommodation, sharing their poorly-lit rooms with other families and buy their goods from a factory shop as part of their wages. Machinery was unfenced and dangerous and there was nothing workers could do about this. So, this is a convincing argument because the treatment of the workers was at the bottom of all their protests.

Although these extracts do not say much about workers' living and working conditions, they are still very useful for understanding why the working people felt frustrated in the early nineteenth century and helping to explain why they got involved in agitation and protest. The government was unsympathetic too and repressed the risings, which made matters worse.

Commentary – Level 3

This is not a convincing answer. The introduction is unnecessary, adds little and is not particularly accurate. The assessment of Extract A does note the author's view of the link between the economy and protest and that different groups of workers responded in different ways, but the supporting information is descriptive and not clearly and appropriately linked to the views of the extract with the assertion that protest was a consequence of industrialisation which is not actually what the extract argues. The assessment of Extract B is simplistic and does not identify the key arguments advanced (although there is an attempt to describe them) and the comment on comparison with A is unnecessary as this is not a comparative exercise. Similarly, whilst there is a statement as to what Extract C is arguing and appropriately identifies a key phrase in the extract, the central thrust of the argument is not understood. Overall, the answer does select from the extracts some key phrases to demonstrate some understanding, but the arguments are not closely understood and the supporting information not always relevant. It is a low Level 3 answer.