



History 7042
Specimen Question Paper 1J (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 1J (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 Britain's policies in South Africa in the late 19th century.

[30 marks]

Student response

The argument given in Extract A, in relation to Britain's policies in South Africa in the late 19th century, is that British imperialism in that area was, in a unique fashion, encouraged by the capitalist, Cecil Rhodes. The extract suggests that other capitalists in South Africa were little interested in furthering British imperialism, since their only desire was to make money and they were quite happy doing that under the rule of the Afrikaners, or else sought their own control. According to the extract, having another nation's government in place was of no interest to them.

Such a view is, however, open to question. Certainly the theories of J A Hobson support the view that imperialism was driven by capitalism and, given the high levels of investment in the Transvaal, it is little wonder that there were calls for British action from those opposed to Afrikaner control. However, there is plenty of evidence to support Rhodes's personal influence on the politics of an area in which he had widespread financial interests.

Rhodes was an industrial entrepreneur had bought up all the smaller diamond mining operations in Kimberley, South Africa between 1871 and 1888 to create the De Beers consolidated Mines Company. By 1890, Rhodes' company had a monopoly of the world's diamond mine supply giving its founder the resources to pursue his personal ambition based on what the extract refers to as 'imperial visions'. Rhodes believed he should bring the 'uncivilised world' under British rule, since the British were the 'finest race in the world', with a right and a duty to control the area. Rhodes founded the British South Africa Company, chartered in 1889 and it was on Rhodes' initiative that settlers were sent into Matabeleland in 1890, establishing Fort Salisbury and gradually opening up the Rhodesias, named in his honour, to British rule. As Prime Minister of Cape Colony from 1890, Rhodes worked to bring the Boer Republics of the Transvaal (where gold had been discovered in 1886) and Orange Free State into a South African federation, in which the British would be the dominant partner. This led him to support the failed Jameson raid of 1895, involving an invasion of the Transvaal in favour of the Uitlanders who were demanding voting rights and citizenship from Kruger's Boer government. Although he had to resign after its failure and died 6 years later, Extract A is certainly correct to draw attention to Rhodes' dominant influence, although it is, perhaps, too dismissive of the motives of other capitalists to be fully convincing.

The argument in Extract B in relation to Britain's policies in South Africa in the late 19th century, is that the second Boer War from 1899 was fought to establish British power and influence over the Transvaal, which was increasing in economic importance, with the intention of unifying the area as part of the British Empire. In order to further this argument, a number of other potential

causes of war are cited but dismissed. For example, the extract suggests the war was not fought to protect British capitalists, trade or gold supplies. It would, however, be hard to dismiss these causes of war entirely. Rhodes certainly had a vested interest in protecting his trading interests and, as the source admits, London's wealth was partly dependent on South Africa's supply of gold bullion. On the other hand, the extract is correct to suggest that there was a strong political motive as Chamberlain, as much as the men on the spot, was also concerned about the threat to British dominance in southern Africa. The Transvaal had already established diplomatic links with Britain's imperial rival, Germany and the strategic importance of South Africa to the defence of Britain's eastern empire must have played a major role in political thinking. Furthermore, Alfred Milner, the South African Commissioner urged a vigorous British policy and it was he who set the terms at the Bloemfontein Conference of May-June 1899. Overall, however, the argument in this extract is not very convincing because it dismisses the importance of the British capitalists.

The argument in Extract C in relation to Britain's policies in South Africa in the late 19th century, is (contrary to Extract B) that the second Boer War was fought for economic motives -namely the development of gold-mining on the Rand. Its argument is that Britain dare not leave such wealth to the Boers for fear of the ambitions of other European imperial powers, particularly Germany. This extract also dismisses other arguments, such as the part played by individuals such as Chamberlain, Rhodes and Milner, the defence of the sea-route to India or growing Afrikaaner nationalism as prime motives. It would be wrong to dismiss the influence of growing nationalism altogether, though, since Kruger's success in securing a fourth term in 1899 reflected the Boers' resentment of growing British interference and the shooting of the Englishman, Tom Edgar by a Transvaal policeman in 1898 prompted a surge of nationalist Uitlander outrage. The importance of German ambition as a provocation for war is also mentioned, but not fully emphasised in this extract. The growing industrial and imperial competition between Britain and Germany in the late 19th century meant that any German interests in South Africa in this period were seen as a provocation.

The argument in Extract C links to suggestions made in both Extracts A and B that economic motives played a key role in the direction of British policies in South Africa in the late nineteenth century and is therefore, a highly convincing source, despite some limitations. Furthermore, like Extract B it acknowledges that international rivalry was a key driving force and, like Extracts A and B, it accepts the role played by key individuals with their own agenda.

Commentary – Level 3/4

The arguments advanced in Extract A are accurately summarised, but the second paragraph, arguing how the Extract is unconvincing, lacks development and suggests some misunderstanding of the arguments in the extract. The reference to those calling for British action is not explicitly made in the extract. Detail of Rhodes' career is extensive and there is an assessment of his imperial ideas, although some of the detail is contextual rather than specific and the final sentence is somewhat generalised and undeveloped.

Again the arguments in Extract B are adequately identified and summarised and there is supporting contextual knowledge to corroborate the importance of political and imperial considerations. It also provides detail of Rhodes' economic as well as imperial interests, but needs to provide more firm supporting contextual knowledge to challenge the extract's dismissal of other reasons for the war.

There is some misunderstanding of Extract C. The answer suggests that the extract argues that second Boer War was fought for economic reasons, but this is not the case. The extract does not dismiss other causes of the war, stating that 'they all played a role', and describes economic motives as the 'catalyst' which is not the same as 'cause' and is possibly not understood by the student. Supporting contextual knowledge is also thin and undeveloped.

The last paragraph, which offers a comparative oversight, is unnecessary. Given the limitations in the assessment of Extract, but the moderately good assessments of A and B, the answer is borderline Level 3/4.