



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2012**

History A

40402C

(Specification 4040)

Unit 2C: Elizabethan England, 1558–1603

Report on the Examination

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General Issues

The general quality of the work produced by students was very good and impressed the examiners. Most students demonstrated a broad knowledge of the period and an understanding of the main concepts through the key issues identified in the specification and the people and events specified. No part of the paper was misinterpreted and there were few cases where students had failed to provide an answer. Even weaker students were able to write at often considerable length on the later parts of Questions 1, 2 or 3. While the main issues and trends in the history of Elizabethan England that the paper covered seemed well understood, there were some small specific areas where students displayed weaker knowledge and understanding. This was evident in relation to the answers to Question 2. However, it is good to see students in the examination integrating their knowledge of the period with the historical skills they have learned to demonstrate convincing historical reasoning. The value of the large, colour images used in the paper was evident; they proved stimulating and accessible across the full ability range.

The demands of this paper were broadly consistent with those of last year. Both Question 1 and Questions 2 or 3 of Section B offered a manageable and largely enjoyable opportunity for all students to show what they understood, knew and could do. It was noticeable that the more able students distinguished themselves on Question 1e and on 2(c) or 3(c).

In Question 1 of the paper many students used knowledge well to support their answers to parts 1(c) to 1(e). In Section B students showed a marked preference for Question 3 about the Voyages of Discovery rather than Question 2 on Catholicism.

Section A

Question 1(a)

The majority of students successfully comprehended and drew inferences about the poor from these sources. Knowledge of poverty and the poor law was not called for, but many students chose to use their own knowledge in this question. The majority of students reached a high Level 2, being able to draw more than one valid inference about the treatment of the poor. At Level 2 students were able typically to make comments about the harsh, severe, cruel or bad treatment of the poor based on the image (A). Able students emphasised the importance of the issue, as evidenced by the treatment of the poor and Sources A and B demonstrated, as one response put it, ‘the Elizabethan intolerance of the poor’. Students also referred at Level 3 to the shame and humiliation of beggars. Picking up rightly on ‘in other parts of the country’ from Source B as evidence of persistent begging, many students pointed out the deterrent effect on others of these punishments. There were a small minority of Level 1 responses that simply paraphrased Source B as well as some who believed the sources proved that the Elizabethans flogged child vagrants.

Question 1(b)

The majority of students showed comprehension and drew inferences about the different impression of the treatment of poverty shown in the Sources C and D to the impression given in Sources A and B. Students found the sources easy to deal with in terms of their ideas and language. A majority of students were able to reach Level 3 through correctly identifying the contrasting impressions in the two sets of sources. Weaker answers often made a simple comparison between the sources based on what they said or suggested the Elizabethans had now begun to help the poor, for this students gained reward at Level 2. The focus of the marking of this question was the inference that could be made from Sources C and D;

reference to Sources A and B, or the context of these sources was acceptable, if it was implicit.

At the highest level of reward students made the observation that the roles of the rich and the poor had been swapped round; it was now the rich and powerful who were seen and treated as criminals if they failed to help the poor, rather than the poor themselves. Commonly, able students recognised that the Elizabethans were serious about helping the poor and attitudes to them had changed. Some examiners noted once again that many students mixed up ‘how’ and ‘why’ sources differed in their responses to this question, thus they began answering Question 1(c) during their answer to Question 1(b).

Question 1(c)

In this question students had a clear target to explain why there were differences between Sources A/B and C/D. Students showed understanding of the skill being tested here and most used the differences between the times of writing to underpin their answers. The general level of thinking in answers to this question was good and led in the main to Level 2 and Level 3 marks.

Although this question elicited a full range of responses, at a basic level a number of students wanted to explain how the sources were different. A number of students largely ignored the provenance of the sources and merely restated a description of **how** the treatment of the poor had changed between the time of Sources A/B and that of Sources C/D. This received Level 1 marks (one–two). A common feature of answers at Level 2 was to explain differences between the sources as found in the change in times between when the sources were produced. Answers focused on simple statements of fact; but did not develop the explanation; most usually maintained that at an earlier time the Elizabethans did not understand the poor and later they did. The development of the time differences in detail and context usually brought Level 3 marks to the candidate (five–six marks). It was observed by many students that the reasons for poverty were better understood in the later years of Queen Elizabeth’s reign. Moreover, it was often stated that Elizabethans recognised that poor harvests were a cause of more poverty was not the fault of the poor themselves. Level 4 answers usually involved an awareness of the example of Christian charity that Whitgift set.

Question 1(d)

Students found the source straightforward and it was easy for them to discuss its utility. Most students knew that a successful answer to this question involved both content and provenance. The vast majority could see that the image displayed the types of beggar, thus students were able to infer or explain that this information was useful as a warning and the historian could learn about types of subterfuge used by vagabonds. Many students offered answers to this question that were rewarded in Level 2 (three-four marks). Examiners noted that many students at this level based their answers around the provenance of the source. In the main the better answers focused on the implications of the fact that torture had been used to extract information; many students believed this made it less useful as a source of information. Other good answers showed an understanding of how the role of JP would help Harman gather information for his book. Level 3 responses saw Source E as evidence of the interest in genuine beggars and those who were criminally inclined. The content frequently referred to in these answers was related to the fact that although the book described the vagabonds it did not seem to explain why they became vagabonds. Students who used the content and commented on provenance were rewarded with level three marks (five–six). At Level 4, there were some fine answers using the students’ own knowledge to integrate content and provenance in a discussion of the context of the time and the value of the source as evidence of what the upper classes thought about vagabonds, the anxieties at the time and just how much the ruling class knew.

Question 1(e)

There were some good answers to this question and the question proved to be a good discriminator. The question was straightforward in its wording. The question did require some thought but then relatively brief, perceptive answers scored highly. Some students who confined their answers to a few simple points or general statements about the poor were limited to Level 1 marks. The majority of students were able to identify and explain simply some points related to the rise in poverty, which they attributed to: bad harvests; agricultural change; sheep farming; inflation; the debasement of the coinage; the dissolution of the monasteries, and the growth of monopolies. These answers usually received three to five marks at Level 2.

For students who were able to give factual support and details about several factors six to eight marks were available. Responses at this level were able to explain in detail the part that the decline of the cloth trade, and the impact that the rise in the population had, combined with other factors, on the nature of poverty and the numbers of poor people. At Level 4 students tended to evaluate different factors and give some weight to their relative importance.

Section B**Question 2(a)**

Many students answered this question. Level 1 marks were usually accrued for knowing that Philip had been married to Queen Elizabeth's half-sister, Mary, and he was the king of Spain. It was answered well on the whole, with many students scoring Level 2 marks. Most students reached Level 2 by showing that they knew the significance of Philip's religion, his secular leadership of Roman Catholic Europe and his role in launching the Spanish Armada.

Question 2(b)

This question drew many good answers from the majority of students who tackled it. Many students relied on Source F, as a helpful starting point, and identified the main ways in which Elizabeth's religious settlement had been a compromise. A small number of students wrongly assumed that the source showed Catholics being burned. Students were rewarded at Level 2 for explaining either how the settlement had been a compromise or, in simple terms, why it was a compromise. Responses at this level stated, in simple terms that Elizabeth wanted to 'keep both sides happy' and 'appease both religions'. At Level 3 the reasons for the compromise, as well as some evidence of how it was a compromise, were expected from answers. Students at Level 3 were able to describe the consequences of the compromise such as 'retaining the people's loyalty', 'to avert a civil war', and 'to prevent Puritans seeking revenge'. Students who discussed and explained these aspects in detail were usually rewarded at Level 3.

Question 2(c)

This question was popular and discriminated well; the question did elicit some detailed and thoughtful answers. Many students knew a great deal about the 1568–1570 period and this enabled them to access level 2 marks. It was less common to see answers from students at Level 2 who simply compared 1568–70 with another period. The responses of students at Level 3 were distinguished by their ability to compare 1568–70 with another period during Queen Elizabeth's reign. At Level 3, and beyond, examiners frequently saw answers that focused on the 1580s as another, and more important, period in changing Queen Elizabeth's policy to Catholics. The students who reached Levels 3 and 4 often mentioned, for example,

the influx of Seminary and Jesuit priests that halted the decline of English Catholicism and brought forth a more severe treatment of English Catholics. As many good answers at Level 3 and 4 explained, the assassination of William of Orange and the Babington plot were events that for many students made the 1580s a more influential and decisive period for Elizabethan policy towards Catholics.

Question 3(a)

This was a simple and very popular question. Students clearly knew some details about Francis Drake. The most frequently referred to aspect of his life was the circumnavigation. At Level 2 students added comment about his role in the defeat of the Spanish Armada, the 'singeing of the King of Spain's beard', and his voyages for discovery and profit bringing back new products, wealth and establishing colonies.

Question 3(b)

This question was given a great deal of help by the picture provided. Source G was quite rightly 'mined' by many students who used it to comment that English sailors enjoyed the adventure of new lands, where they could hunt and discover new exotic creatures. Higher marks were gained by students who explained about the wealth and fame that went with successful voyages. Some very detailed answers pointed out that sailors aimed to establish colonies and establish new trade routes. A few students noted that the sailors were sometimes motivated to take the fight to Spain in the New World. A few answers mentioned that for some sailors this took on a religious crusade. Many good answers recognised the intention to deal in slaves that motivated some English sailors.

Question 3(c)

The question was straightforward and some students enjoyed the opportunity to display their understanding. This was more popular than Question 2(c). At Level 1, students just had a few simple points to make usually about the benefits of the voyages. Most students had knowledge and understanding about the improvement to English sea power that voyages conferred, producing more experienced sailors and some better ships. The defeat of the Spanish Armada was usually cited as evidence of this in practical terms. These answers were rewarded at Level 2. It was noticeable that frequently at Level 2 students simply listed benefits such as new products that were introduced to England. At Level 3 some students demonstrated awareness of the money, trade, and colonies that benefitted the development of England. The better answers at Levels 3 and 4 made a strong distinction between short term and longer term benefits.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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