

# AQA A-level History Workbook for NEA

## Page 15 Getting the stem and the date range right

- 1 What changed and what stayed the same in the development of women's rights in Britain in the years 1815–1921?

The stem is weak as it is likely to lead to a narrative type response. In answering this question, you might be tempted to simply describe everything that had changed and then describe everything that stayed the same. The purpose of the NEA is to analyse and to evaluate – this stem encourages neither of these qualities. It would be better if a particular event is identified and the question asks how far this was the most important event in the development of women's rights. Alternatively, simply changing the stem slightly to 'There was more continuity than change in women's rights in Britain in the years 1815–1921.' How far do you agree with this view? would work better.

- 2 Discuss the reasons for the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe in the years 1848–1945.

This stem does not encourage debate. 'Discuss' as a stem rarely works well as it can encourage a simple description. It is better to identify a possible key reason for the development of anti-Semitism in Europe and ask how significant that factor is. For example, 'How far was the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe in the years 1848–1945 due to ideological change?'

- 3 In what ways was the emancipation of the serfs in Russia in 1861 important in the improvement in the life of Russian peasants in the context of the years 1855–1964?

This stem does not encourage debate. All it really asks for is the identification of factors that illustrate that the life of peasants improved as a result of emancipation. Historians generally do not like lists of factors, but prefer that there is some sort of prioritisation, or an attempt to explain how factors interact – for example long-term or short-term factors. This question encourages the production of a list. A far better stem would be 'To what extent was the emancipation of the serfs in Russia in 1861 the most significant factor in the improvement of the life of the peasants in the years 1855–1964?'

- 4 How does the rise of nationalism in the years 1789–1870 explain the formation of Germany in 1871?

The stem encourages a narrative response, but a fairly simple addition would make the question so much better. The stem should be changed to 'How far does the rise the nationalism in the years 1789–1870 explain the formation of Germany in 1871?' This allows for a comparison between nationalism and other potential factors and therefore moves the likely response away from simply describing events towards a good relative evaluation.

## Page 17 Strong or weak title?

Title	Suitable	Not suitable
Assess the reasons for women gaining the vote in the context of the years 1821–1921.		Encourages a descriptive response
Individuals were more important than the government in gaining civil rights for black Americans.	Should encourage a comparison of factors	
Assess the reasons for Napoleon's downfall in 1814.		Encourages a descriptive response
How far was Elizabeth's reign a Golden Age for England?	Will encourage debate	
Assess the social, economic and political effects of industrial growth on Europe between 1750 and 1900.		Encourages a descriptive response and it is 150 years too long
'Gandhi was the most significant factor in the achievement of Indian Independence.' How valid is this view of the years 1857–1947?	Encourages a comparison of factors	
How far were accusations of witchcraft in the seventeenth century founded on fact?		Premise of the question is flawed – effectively asking if witches really exist

## Page 23 Identifying interpretations

### 1 Which extract mainly offers an interpretation?

Extract C mainly offers an interpretation. This extract is trying to advance a particular point of view and indeed does so right from the opening sentence. The interpretation is maintained throughout this short extract, and suggests that anti-Semitism was the result of deep-seated social changes occurring with the rise of industrial capitalism.

### 2 Which extract mainly describes the events?

Extract B mainly describes events. A series of factual statements is presented. At times, it is easy to see how this descriptive response might have been turned into something a little more analytical and evaluative. Unfortunately, by the end of the extract, it is unclear what the interpretation is and what opinion the historian is trying to convey.

### 3 Which extract mainly explains the view of a 'school of history'?

Extract A describes different schools of history. Description of what different historians have thought about a period is still just a description. Extract A reads a little like a literature review that summarises the views of others and therefore fails to offer a clear opinion. Use of schools of history can be helpful if this is used to support an argument. This extract simply describes the views.

### 4 Which extract would you consider to be the most suitable to use in your NEA and why?

The most helpful extract is Extract C as it offers a clear view that can be integrated into an NEA. A student might use this view either to support their own, or to illustrate problems with an alternative. The extracts should provide material that can be debated and analysed.

## Page 29 Evaluating the content of an interpretation

*What is the difference between the two responses?*

The obvious difference is that Response A summarises views while Response B tries to evaluate

the views. Response A also seems to misinterpret the main thrust of the extract – namely the importance of religion. While the extract does refer to religious motivation, it does not suggest that it was the main motivation, as Response A seems to suggest. Response B is the product of having read the entire extract and of recognising that about midway through the extract suggests that factors other than religion were very important.

*Which of these responses simply describes a view?*

Response A simply describes a view.

*Which of these responses correctly identifies the main argument of the extract?*

Response B correctly identifies the main view – that the motivation was not one factor alone. Response A appears to simply take the first sentence of the extract and assume that this is the main point being made.

*Which one of these responses evaluates a view?*

Response B evaluates the view throughout. Response A has one attempt at evaluation in the final sentence but this is entirely assertive and there is no attempt to integrate contextual knowledge.

*What evaluative words are used?*

'This is a convincing argument'; 'it would surely be difficult ...'; 'The author is quite correct ...'; 'the source fails to consider'; 'there is no support for the view ...'; 'the view has roundly been disproven'.

*Identify where the own knowledge is directly linked to the source.*

This is done in Response B and most evaluation is supported in this manner. In the opening of Response B there is reference to the numbers that went on crusade. There is reference to the Council that called the Crusade with some good contextual knowledge. There is reference to the Great Schism, and also evidence that those setting off east, such as Baldwin, did so only by raising funds beforehand.

## Page 31 Evaluating the time/context and limitations of the interpretation

- 1 Which is a better response to the time/context and limitations requirement?

Response B is better in all regards.

- 2 Explain why the response that you have chosen is better.

Response B avoids the generic statements of Response A, for example in reference to the academic profile of the historian. There has plainly been an attempt to research this historian and to consider the context in which the extract was written. The evaluation in Response B is balanced with recognition that some material would still be inaccessible, and gives specific reference to an historical event.

- 3 How might the better response have been improved further? What additional information might you want about the historian?

The answer is constrained by its shortness. However, further detail on the academic profile of the historian would be welcome, but this needs to be linked to the actual set question. Additionally, there is still some assertion – for example that Barnaby is able to read and access original sources – and some evidence backing this up would strengthen the argument.

## Page 37 Using provenance

- 1 How does the information about the authors affect the value?

This suggests that Source A has a first-hand insight from an individual closely involved in decision making on the ground, although perhaps less valuable as not involved in policy decisions. The author of Source B has more of a strategic oversight giving an indication of policy and is therefore more valuable. Source C as a journalist may be more objective, especially in working for a major newspaper. However, further research would be needed to establish this.

- 2 How does the type of source affect the value?

Source C as a newspaper might be valuable as it gives an objective and reliable account. Conversely it might be valuable as it reflects the fears and assumptions of the age. However, Sources A and B were also given to media outlets and therefore the same arguments might be deployed.

- 3 How does the purpose of the source affect the value?

The purpose can be deemed to be whatever might be helpful in advancing the overall argument in response to the NEA question. The purpose of Source A might be to undermine the positive image of the anti-war movement. That of Source B might be to advance Giap's own legacy and any positive view that historians might have of him. Source C might be simply to convey a factual account. Any of these might be linked to the assessment of value.

- 4 Which source is likely to give the most reliable insight and which source is the most valuable?

Source C is the most reliable as it is more likely to be objective. The value of the source is however not determined by reliability alone or indeed at all, but by how it helps to support the overall judgement. Hence any of the sources might be considered to be the most valuable, depending on how it is to be used in the overall NEA.

- 5 Is the most reliable or accurate of these three sources also the most valuable?

No. Reliability and accuracy are not the same. It may be that a source is valuable because it is reliable and accurate, but this may not always be the case – for example a piece of propaganda.

## Page 39 Evaluation of primary sources using the content

The paragraph that better evaluates the value of the sources:

*Paragraph 2 better evaluates the value of the sources*

Why I think this:

*Paragraph 2 links the sources to the argument being advanced. Value cannot exist in the abstract. Paragraph 1 simply asserts that something is of value without explaining why this might be the case.*

## Page 47 Writing the introduction

- 1 Is there a clear answer to the set question?

Yes, the answer is that there was more continuity than change across the period.

- 2 Is evidence identified to support the answer?

The greatest continuity is identified as the use of the secret police. This is developed throughout the introduction.

- 3 Is there evidence that a range of factors is going to be considered?

Yes, there is consideration of other factors, especially relating to change, for example the shift from War Communism to the NEP.

- 4 What advice would you offer to help to improve this introduction?

The answer is not as clearly set out as it might be. It is not until the closing few lines that the answer is expressed – it would be better to make it more obvious.

### Page 49 Opening sentences

Read the following possible opening sentences for the question 'The success of the Reformation in Europe in the years 1517–1620 was mainly due to the printing press.' How far do you agree with this view?

Highlight in purple the sentences that introduce an argument related to the question.

Highlight in red the sentences that simply describe an event related to the Reformation.

Sentence that introduces an argument related to the question.

Sentences that describes an event related to the Reformation.

- 1 In 1517, a Friar who had become disenchanted by the legal profession announced that the Church needed reform.
- 2 The printing press was not new, but the development of movable type made it much easier to print pages cheaply thus helping ideas spread much more quickly.
- 3 Many people in Europe were very sincere Christians.
- 4 The years 1517–1620 saw the reformation spread to many of the German states.
- 5 The Reformation was a reform of the existing practices of the Church and saw the destruction of images such as statues of saints.
- 6 The Reformation involved a good range of individuals such as Martin Luther, Zwingli and also Calvin.
- 7 The Reformation latched on to a widespread desire for change, especially among those who had been paying a large amount of money for the upkeep of their local church.

### Page 55 Integrating sources and interpretations

- 1 How could the material be linked more directly to the reasons for Indian independence?

There is no reference to actual independence, which is the focus of the question. The suggestion that 1857 set in motion certain long-term events that led to independence would provide the link.

- 2 What does the answer need to do to explain and assess the historians' views more?

There is a tendency to describe the views of others, or to describe how the view is countered by another. However, this is not evaluation. Knowledge should be used to support an argument about whether the interpretation is convincing.

### Page 59 Interim judgements

- 1 Thus, Napoleon definitely destroyed the gains of the Revolution in terms of democracy and constitutional government. Is this valid?

No. There is some suggestion that Napoleon did not serve the interests of the Directory and that he used the coup Fructidor to give himself more influence. However, the point is balanced with the suggestion that he did keep some elements of the Constitution and therefore the statement is not valid.

- 2 Napoleon did not destroy the gains of the Revolution because he consulted the people in plebiscites and had universal male suffrage. Is this valid?

No. There is clear argument that the plebiscites were rigged and that his decisions were based upon political expediency. For example, men over the age of 21 could vote, but only for registered candidates.

- 3 Napoleon did not completely destroy the gains of the revolution in the sense that there was still a constitution and the gains had already been undermined by the previous revolutionary regime. However, he undermined any real hopes for a democratic and constitutional rule by restricting the candidates to be voted for and by rigging plebiscites; so although he kept a pretence of continuity, he actually undermined the gains made. Is this valid?

Yes, this accurately conveys the balanced response seen in the extract.