

A LEVEL

Teachers' Guide

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y100 – Assessing AO2

Version 1

Introduction

The assessment of AO2 is an important part of the Y100 essay. It involves the analysis and evaluation of primary evidence. This is evidence which is clearly not the work of later commentators or historians and is from or close to the period of the question. There may be some leeway here, for example with the monastic chronicles of the reign of King John, the sources may not be strictly within the lifetime of the king, but are conventionally used as primary material. Generally though, primary sources will be from the time of the topic being considered. They may or may not be first-hand accounts from people who were observers or participants of events but they will be contemporary with the period of the events. It is not intended to restrict the use of source material to written sources and visual material; film, photographs, buildings and artefacts may be used.

However, it is important that evidence of whatever kind is not merely taken at face value. It is important for candidates to select primary evidence with care and to make sure that it is useful. For example, a cartoon about the New Deal may be useful for showing attitudes to it, but much less so in assessing its economic effects. Not every primary source used in an essay will be evaluated but there should be enough evaluation of evidence to show that this skill has been demonstrated. The marking should consider how effective the evaluation is. In that respect, similar criteria should be used as in the source questions in H505 Paper 1. Evaluation should be supported by consideration of provenance and appropriate contextual knowledge. The marks given for evaluation should take into account the support offered for critical judgement of a range of sources and it is helpful when marginal comment shows this. Excellent or very good evaluation should have appropriate support. Good evaluation will be supported to an extent and some evaluation will have some explanation though less developed. Below that the evaluation may be limited or implicit or demonstrated merely by the choice of primary material. The examples below are intended to show different sorts of evaluation at different levels.

Examples with commentary

Below are extracts showing different levels of evaluation. Please remember that the final judgement must be made on the essays as a whole and these extracts are only guides.

Extract A

How effective were the social reforms of the Liberals 1906-14?

In a report of 1909 by Winston Churchill on National Insurance and Labour Exchanges it was stated to the cabinet that 'no scheme of unemployment insurance would be worked except in connection with an extensive apparatus for finding work, and testing willingness to work.' This report further justifies the opinion offered by historian I. Packer that the National Insurance scheme was limited in its scope and ultimately could only work, without possible exploitation, with extensive safeguarding against abuse of the new protections.

Here a primary source is being used to try to test a secondary view that the 1911 National Insurance Acts were limited in scope. The explanation of the historical view lacks clarity, though. There is no real indication of the nature, context or purpose of Churchill's report. It is also unclear how it supports the view. There is no evaluation of the report and the analysis of its content and significance is limited. The most that this does is to include some primary evidence; if this were typical of the treatment of evidence then a Level 1 or 2 mark should be given.

Extract B

To what extent was Vietnam transformed by Communism 1974-1990?

The historian Z. Abuza puts forward the interpretation that 'I has tolerated no dissent, monopolising all political power and decision making.' This demonstrated that communism had total control over Vietnam after winning the war. Le Duan's victory speech given on 15 May 1975 supports Abuza's interpretation. He was Former General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam suggesting he would be supportive of victory. He said 'this victory is the victory of socialism' which suggests that the Vietnam War was really about a political transformation which was so important that it took around 3.3 m lives and took 20 years.

The primary source is dated but not otherwise much contextualised and its author is identified. It touches on the point made by Abuza but not in a developed way. There is a touch of evaluation but this does not much link to the point being made. The short quotation is not adequate to show that the source supports the historian. If this level were sustained then this would only be Level 2 at most.

Extract C

How far did the Hitler regime depend on consent rather than coercion?

To achieve a Master Race, Hitler would expand Germany and restore a New Order in Europe, purifying the German nation. His speeches and passion for voicing his concerns to many, with the promise to reform and change the country for the better, demonstrated by the SOPADE (Socialist Democratic Party of Germany) report of 1934 that stated 'Hitler has got the approval of the majority of the nation...he has made Germany strong; he did this by resolving issues concerning the economy, society and Germany's world status. The SOPADE reports are extremely useful in that they speak candidly, allowing historians to see the real effects of Hitler's regime on the public. Their purpose was to tell the truth about what was going on in Germany; they were published under secret corresponding systems and proved to be a challenge to Hitler.

This uses a primary source which is dated. It does more than use the source in support of a view that Hitler relied on more than just coercion. There is some comment on the value of the source and its purpose. However, this is not very developed and supported. This sort of evaluation would, if sustained, fall into the category of 'some evaluation' and should be assessed at Level 3. More developed analysis would put the source into the context of 1934, explain the origin more and why this could be believed. The significance of the clandestine nature of the report would be explored.

So far the evaluation has been limited and has not used developed analysis of provenance and detailed contextual knowledge.

Extract D

To what extent was Saladin a devout, chivalrous, champion of Islam?

Negative accounts of Jerusalem's acquisition are often laughably skewed, with De Expugnatione terrae Sanctae per Saladinum an account seemingly written by an anonymous Templar, taking on an almost propagandist quality in its sentimental tone. The author claims those who could not pay the ransom were 'slain by the army's swords' and that the Saracens defiled the Temple by shouting with polluted lips 'Allahu akbar!' In other words, they were too loud. This Templar's ability to condemn Saladin is based on misinformation and exaggeration. This is a personal account and has no claims of objectivity. Despite this, Saladin's execution of Templar knights after Hattin is reported by Al-Din-Al- Isfahani and supported by Runciman.

This is certainly critical but the source is not dated and its origins are not explored much. The answer does explain what it says, though not in much detail. There is no explanation of why it was propagandist and some criticism is weak – defiling the temple is not quite the same as being too loud. Though it says it is a personal account this is not developed. Why it is exaggerated and what the misinformation is are not explained. There is some knowledge – not about Jerusalem but the aftermath of Hattin. A secondary source (Runciman) is used to test a primary source unconvincingly. This is more developed than the previous extract but without more developed analysis of both provenance and contextual knowledge this is typical of work at Level 3 rather than the higher bands. It is good to note the limitations and it is good to try and use some knowledge, but very good or excellent evaluation should go further.

Extract E

How important was terror in maintaining Nazi rule over Germany 1933-9?

The centralisation of German secret services under Hermann Goering in 1933 was hugely significant in maintaining Nazi rule. Goering claims 'The Gestapo is the principal reason why in Germany and Prussia there is no Marxist or Communist threat'. Although this was made to boost his own position and he overstates the effectiveness of the organisation, his claims can be justified. 225,000 people were convicted of political crimes between 1933 and 1939. His claim that he was 'kept informed daily, even hourly' is reflected in the sheer volume of case files written by the Gestapo – almost 70,000 were found in Dusseldorf. A separate investigation of files in Krefeld substantiates the role of the Gestapo in combatting political enemies, finding that 59 out of 79 cases brought against KPD or SPD members were funded by government intelligence. In 1935 Himmler documented the decision by Hitler to prohibit the misrepresentation of lawyers' in such cases. This source comes directly from Nazi communications where the misrepresentation of Hitler's views is extremely unlikely, given the punishment for such a transgression.

Here we have some detailed knowledge to support Goering's view with a touch of explanation of why the statement was made but not much on the provenance. The validity view that Hitler himself restricted the defence of those accused is considered by reference to the provenance. If more about the provenance of Goering's evidence had been included and more knowledge to support the evidence about Himmler's statement of Hitler's views, then this might have gone higher. As it is, both pieces are assessed and used and there is some good detail to support; this sort of analysis is typical of Level 5 at AO2. A pity that the point about overstatement is not supported by consideration of why he was writing or speaking and some knowledge about the limitations of the Gestapo.

Extract F

Assess the view that the Barbarian invasions were the primary cause of the decline of the Western Roman Empire between 376-476 AD.

The Roman historian Salvian bemoaned in the late 5th century 'Why has God allowed us to be conquered by the barbarians? And asked why God had 'permitted us to be subject to the rule of our enemies?' This suggests that the Barbarian destruction was on such a devastating scale that it seemed to be the will of God. Salvian's emotive statement therefore proves useful as it provided key contemporary evidence for the traditional view that the Empire was conquered by the eternal forces of the foreign barbaric tribes as he portrays them as hegemonic conquerors sent by God as a divine punishment for the Empire's sins. The Vandal sack of Rome in 455 AD in which Geiseric stripped the bronze from the Temple of Jupiter Maximus and looted much of the city's wealth would suggest Salvian's evidence is valid. However, the primary audience of his account was the Pontiff of Rome which may suggest that his description is exaggerated as he was likely hoping to gain imperial protection of his monastery if the Barbarian threat was deemed sufficient enough to warrant central intervention. Although this makes Salvian's claims of destruction somewhat dubious and lessens the extent to which the source can fully support the traditional view of barbaric invasions as the primary cause of Rome's decline, his description of the barbaric violence proves useful in validating and strengthening the traditional view taken by Frankopan.

The historian Bispham's view of Barbarian oversaturation of the army is strengthened by even4rts in 376 where the Goths asked Valens to allow them to settle on the

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southern bank of the Danube and were accepted into the Empire as foederati before rising in rebellion. The disloyal nature of these Barbarian recruits is also validated by the Roman philosopher Adrianople Themistius who stated that at the first sign of trouble the barbaric recruits 'vanished altogether like shadows' This source must be viewed critically however as in 451 AD the rampaging Attila the Hun was defeated with the help of a coalition of Barbarian foederati including the Visigoths.

This analysis uses contextual knowledge to test both primary sources and developed consideration of the possible motives and context of Salvian. It also integrates evaluation of primary sources and the testing of the historians' views. Sustained, this would result in a Level 6 mark.

Extract G

How far was Italy united by 1871?

Victor Emmanuel addressed the new parliament of the Kingdom of Italy in 1871 and said 'the work to which we consecrated our life is accomplished. After long trials of exiation Italy is restored to herself and to Rome'. Given that this was a public speech in the aftermath of the French withdrawal from Rome which led to the city becoming the new capital, it might be expected that this would be an emotional outburst rather than a strictly accurate historical statement. It was intended as part of a joyous celebration. It reflects the view of the political establishment of the new Italy that the unthinkable had finally happened and that the patchwork of states was united under the flag of the House of Savoy with common institutions and flag. However, this view and the King's statement is less credible when one considers that it was Piedmont's institutions which were imposed on Italy and Victor Emmanuel refused to alter his title from Victor Emmanuel II of Savoy to Victor Emmanuel of Italy and it was Piedmont's constitution that was imposed on Italy, suggesting more that Italy had been annexed than 'restored to herself'. The view of the king is sharply contradicted by that of the nationalist Mazzini who wrote in 1871 that the new Italy was 'a dead corpse'.

This evaluation is very sharply focused on the nature and origin of the source and uses another primary source and contextual knowledge to assess it. It shows a good level of understanding of the topic and the context and is an effective assessment. If sustained this would be a Level 6 mark for AO2.

Annotation

The extracts above mostly have some evaluation, but it is very different in quality and support, so the simple annotation 'AO2 Eval' may not be helpful. It is useful to show where provenance is considered and where the answer applies knowledge and to make an overall judgement about the quality of the evaluation. Please don't write L6 excellent evaluation against one section. However if you have written excellent PS evaluation a number of times this will be a guide to the final level. Similarly if you have say 'some eval' a number of times, but have not written 'good' or 'very good' or 'excellent', then that confirms the view that the candidate has consistently offered 'some evaluation' and confirms the mark at the top of Level 3. If there is no annotation referring to any inclusion of any primary sources, then no marks can be given for AO2.

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