

Examiners' Report
June 2012

GCSE History 5HB03 3D

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June 2012

Publications Code UG032487

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Introduction

This was the sixth series of this Schools History Project Source Enquiry on the work of the historian. The focus of the enquiry was the quarrel between Henry II and Thomas Becket and the events leading up to Becket's murder in Canterbury Cathedral. Most candidates were able to demonstrate responses that were worthy of some credit and many produced answers that were well argued, developed and supported by using the sources provided and applying some additional recalled knowledge. There was evidence that more candidates were able to access all questions and generally achieve more than basic level marks. As with earlier series achieving the higher levels of question 5 many candidates found difficult. With a topic on the Middle Ages knowledge of relevant sources was more limited than earlier responses on chronologically later topics.

There was continuing evidence that centres are responding to comments in earlier reports. Certainly there were fewer questions that presented blank responses. Most commonly these were concentrated on Question 5. Many however still struggle to cross reference sources in responses to question 3 and described what each source said or showed. Fewer were able to deploy understanding of differences in content alongside comment on support provided by the nature and provenance of each source. Question 4 produced many answers that were good on content but fewer were able to comment on this and the sources nature, origin and purpose. Moreover many comments on utility focused on simplistic learnt responses of dubious historical value. Timing was generally less of a problem for candidates than in earlier series. However some candidates produced answers that were overlong in response to questions 1 and 2 which left them with difficulties completing developed answers to questions 3, 4 and 5. One key to improving attainment is to measure responses to the mark tariff on offer. There were fewer responses written in the wrong sections of the answer book. Though this continues to be a problem that could easily be avoided if candidates made sure they turned the page to continue their answers and not write them on the opposite page of the preceding question. There were far too many simplistic responses concerning the value and utility of sources to questions such as 1 and 5 that do not require it. There were fewer though still too many responses which see all primary sources as being more reliable and useful and secondary ones as made up and therefore worthless.

Question 1

Generally this question was answered well by most candidates. There has been a quite definite improvement in the number of candidates who understand the term "inference" and achieve a Level 3 mark. Most candidates could give at least one inference, the most common being "that this new position changed his outlook on life and (he) became a more responsible person" or that he started to set a good example as Archbishop of Canterbury, "devoted to living as a role model". Many noted that Becket became truly religious.

The problem with answers to this question is that a number of candidates continue to write far more than they need for a question that is only worth 6 marks, using the background information supplied on page 2 of the Sources Booklet or even referring to other sources in the booklet. They would be better encouraged to save their time for Question 5. A few still confuse Source A with the background information, often writing articulate answers from that which do not earn marks. Candidates should be warned that there will always be background information on this paper and that they should clearly identify the source that the question asks them to study. A few misread the question and offered inferences about Henry II rather than Becket, normally concerning Henry's reasons for appointing Becket as Archbishop. Finally, a small number of candidates still repeat statements from the Source and repeat the details that back up that statement. The most common was that Becket took his "new job very seriously". Candidates still need to be advised that quoting directly from the source is not making an inference.

1 Study Source A.

What can you learn from Source A about Thomas Becket?

(6)

When analysing source A I can infer that Becket honoured and was proud of the position he had been given from the King as it states how he "stopped getting drunk" and also stopped "chasing women" which allow me to imply that he saw the importance of his job highly so therefore took effort into changing his lifestyle. Also from source A I can infer that Becket must have had an extremely close and trustworthy relationship with that of the King as immediately that Henry got Becket "appointed as Archbishop" an act in which you would not give to just anyone implying a strong relationship between the two. Finally from the source A I can infer that Becket took his job

very seriously in terms of the acts he carried. It explains how Becket "spent hours ~~an~~ everyday praying" which I believe shows a great deal of commitment ~~reality~~ reliability and goodness in his personality.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

A typical top Level 3 response two inferences with support.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

if you copy details from the source and nothing else the most you can achieve is Level 1 and 1 mark.

Question 2

It was gratifying that the vast majority of students were able to reach Levels 2 or 3 on this question and that very many answers were wide-ranging. Most could select information from Source B to support the interpretation that the relationship between Thomas and Henry was breaking down. Many referred to Henry being rude and aggressive and insulting Becket about his origins while Becket remained calm. A number of candidates were rewarded for linking this with the fact that the source was written by a monk who had been told of the conversation by Becket and that this could mean that the source intentionally favoured Becket. Candidates could identify that Henry felt betrayed by his friend, that as a King he saw himself as of a higher status than Becket and expected obedience, while Thomas used the Bible and his belief in God, who was higher than any man, to justify his position. Some could identify who St. Peter was. A very few candidates, achieving the higher grades, recognised that the position of the two men signified a conflict of authority between the Church and the Monarchy which was beyond Henry and Becket's personal relationship.

2 Study Source B.

What impression does the author try to give about the relationship between Thomas Becket and King Henry II? Explain your answer, using Source B.

(8)

I think the author is trying to give you the impression that Henry and Thomas didn't get on very well. Henry seems very rude towards Thomas and it almost seems like Henry comes across as thinking he's better than Thomas. Thomas seems ungrateful of what Henry's done for him and both seem to be at war with each other. It seems like there's a tension in the air between them and that there's a constant battle between them both to be better than each other. Henry acts as if he is jealous of Thomas and how serious he is taking his job. Henry appears to be trying to remind Thomas that if it wasn't for him Henry wouldn't be where he is today which makes me think he's jealous. Henry quotes "You are son of my pheasants!" it seems like Henry is trying to say

Thomas isn't as special as he thinks he is.

The author makes it look like Henry didn't like Thomas as much anymore because Henry thought he was being sarcastic for granted by Thomas. He's made it look like he turned his whole life around by saying "I have raised you from poverty to one of the highest positions in England".

Thomas thanks god for him being archbishop and not just Henry which makes Thomas look a lot more religious / dedicated than Henry.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

A solid Level 3 response that effectively selects from the source to explain message.



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Examiner Tip

Make good use of the source to support your explanation of the message. Avoid just paraphrasing the source.

Question 3

Most students were able to reach Level 2 on this question. There were thoughtful attempts to use the sources to consider the level of Henry's guilt and recognition that Sources C and D implied that his behaviour made him responsible even though he seemed to have given no direct order. Generally Source C was recognised as providing the clearest evidence of Henry's guilt because of the rage displayed, while D was seen as backing this. Sometimes, however, candidates used D to back E as evidence that the knights acted on their own in initiative. Some candidates could be quite nuanced in what they said on the implications of Source D and deserved credit for it:

Source D completely agrees with the statement and quite repeats what Source C says just by wording it differently. This suggests that maybe the King was the source of Becket's death all along. The reason why I think this is when D says things like 'The King was annoyed by complaints from bishops,' 'lost control of himself,' and was 'full of rage.' All this seems to suggest and point in one direction that after all the King wasn't innocent.

As has been common on previous occasions, more candidates commented on the content of the sources than on their nature, but comments on their nature have increased. Indeed some candidates reaching Level 2 commented only on their nature. Some comments on the nature of the source remained quite basic and simple. Often the fact that Simon Schama was writing in 2000, a long time after the events he described, was taken as enough to invalidate what he says, although answers could use this point with some subtlety. The fact that D and E were produced close to the event was often seen as clear evidence of their reliability. Some candidates recognised that the fact that D and E were both by priests was important. Sometimes this was taken to mean that they are truthful because priests would not lie. However, the very best candidates could blend all these factors together in ways that produced a sophisticated and judicious, if not completely perfect, answer:

Source C was a book written to inform, and so is intended to have reliable information. It was written in 2000, and so being a long time away from the events it is entirely possible that some of the information that is featured in the book could have deteriorated over the thousand or so years. It tells us of the King's anger when the priest continued to defy him. It suggests that, while murder could be avoided, the King definitely wanted the problem of Becket solved. The author, Simon Schama, is unlikely to be biased but there is no way he could have received the information first hand. This means he could have taken from an incorrect or other biased source.

Source D was a piece written to keep a record of the event, and so is intended to have reliable information. It was written 30 years after the event, and so is fresh on the topic of Becket's murder. It explains about the actions that occurred in the time, and so could be very useful evidence to suggest that the King was unintentionally responsible for the murder of Becket. However, this was written by a priest and so a possible bias could be inflicted for either side, be it a touch of vengeance for the Archbishop, a touch of support for the King, fear of the King's power if he opposed him, his colleagues views etc. This information seems reliable, but it cannot be told whether there is a bias or not.

Source E is a letter written just after the murder of Becket. It was not written to inform other people, and so can be seen as a valuable because the facts are not bended to entertain the reader. It tells of the King's innocence in the murder affair. However, being written by a

priest who supported the King there is almost no chance for this to be bias free. It is useful to see the King's influence maybe, but if you want to know what really happened find a different piece of evidence.

I believe source D to be the most useful, as despite its possible bias, it was written closer to the time and is less likely to be biased towards the King. It is also supported by source C.

The advice that candidates require for question 3 is that they should try to reach a judgement as to how far the sources support the proposition of the question, and for this they need to take into account both what the sources say and what their nature is. Far too many articulate and thoughtful candidates are content with sophisticated matching instead of finishing with statements such as this:

Overall, Sources C, D and E suggest greatly (with the exception of Source E) that Henry was to blame for Becket's death. They suggest that his temper got out of hand which in turn made the knights act.

On the other hand Source E doesn't suggest Henry was to blame but the knights who carried out the brutal killing were. So in general there are mixed views although more towards Henry having a strong role in the death. The majority of the three sources suggest that the King was involved in the death to a great extent.

In summary Students achieving L1 simply paraphrased the sources without any explanation or linkage to the question, telling what each source said.

L2 Students simply matched some relevant information from the sources, without focussing on 'how'.

L3 Students used quite sophisticated, cross-referencing the sources to show the king was to blame others that the knights were responsible to reach a balanced judgement. Use was made of words such as partly, strongly and least in support of their argument. There were students who actually commented on the King not giving an explicit order in any source but was clearly involved.

1: how far do 2: how far don't

3 Study Sources C, D and E.

3: ~~for~~ reliability P. C.

4: sum it up

How far do Sources C, D and E suggest that Henry was to blame for Becket's death?
Explain your answer, using these sources.

(10)

Source C supports the idea that Henry was to blame for Becket's death as despite unintentionally doing so he asked his knights to get rid of the problem of Becket: 'The king's outburst could only mean one thing; that he wanted the unbearable problem of Becket to go away.' Source D also supports the idea that Henry was to blame for Becket's death very far, as it tells us that the king was 'extremely angry' and 'his words were full of rage against Becket and were not wise.' Therefore it was his fault the knights felt the king wanted Becket to be killed, and 4 sources C and D suggest Henry was to blame for Becket's death quite far.

However Source E does not support the idea that Henry was to blame as the letter written by Peter of Blois states 'the king was in no way guilty of his death.' Therefore that Source E doesn't support C and D ~~about~~ or the idea the king was to blame for Becket's death at all.

Source C is also fairly reliable, as despite being written in 2000, many years after the event, this source is also from a textbook which is often written with a lot of research so we can trust the source is fairly reliable. Furthermore we can also see that source D is also very reliable as it is written by someone alive in the 12th century which was when the event happened however it may be biased and against the king. Source E however, despite being written at the time of the event is less reliable than sources C and D as it is written by a priest who supported the king, so it may be biased.

Overall sources C and D support very far that King Henry was to blame for Bracton's death, unlike source E which does not support this view and is not very reliable.



ResultsPlus
Examiners' Comments

A good Level 3 answer that makes good use of content and nature in cross referencing all three sources.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Make sure you use all three sources and focus on the question set.

Question 4

Question 4: As with question 3, most candidates were able to reach Level 2 with this question, considering either the content of the sources or their nature. Although most candidates reaching Level 2 continue to compare content, there was an increase in the numbers who considered nature alone, which in a way is gratifying. Candidates should be encouraged to consider both aspects of the sources to reach the higher marks in Level 3.

There was a variety of responses to both sources. Source F was recognised as valuable as a detailed, eyewitness account. Candidates often noted that it was written ten years after the murder and this caused a variety of interpretations, that Grim might have forgotten details, that he might have embellished his role to make himself seem more important or in a better light, or that the event was so horrific that he was unlikely to have forgotten any of it. A lot of candidates recognised the two to three hundred year gap between the production of the painting and the murder. It was felt to be less valuable because it showed only a moment in the whole incident but, however, it did provide a clear and detailed visual source and the painter, producing the image so long after the event, did not have to fear Henry's wrath and so could be more objective. There was matching of the sources based on the kneeling priest in the picture and Grim's more active role in Source F, and on the wounds being inflicted on Becket in the picture, including the cut on his head and Grim's description of Becket's head being cut open. Some candidates suggested that G might be biased because it was produced by monks who might have favoured Becket. A very few supported this by mentioning the halo around Becket's head as evidence of a favourable view of Becket. A few candidates observed that as it was an illustration from a book, the written material around it could provide valuable evidence:

Also the source is from a handwritten book by monks and so is useful as these people are from the same field of work and so familiar with events and records kept by the church.

In short very few students only achieved a L1, making simplistic comments on the sources or leaving out a source. The comments were general like F is written, so therefore can tell us more or G being a painting leaving nothing to interpretation / imagination.

Most students achieved L2 by either looking in detail at the source content and comparing what you can / cannot learn from it or by looking at the nature and how reliable the source is.

Those students who looked at nature of both and commented on the content of at least one source achieved L3.

4 Study Sources F and G.

Is Source F or Source G more useful to the historian who is enquiring into the murder of Becket in Canterbury Cathedral? Explain your answer, using Sources F and G.

(10)

Source F is an eyewitness account of the murder of Thomas Becket in 1170. It is ~~valuable~~^{useful} to the historian because it is primary, and an eyewitness account of the murder. Also, there ~~probably~~ aren't many eye witness accounts of this particular event around. It was written to persuade others reading it that Thomas Becket was an innocent man, and that it was Henry's violence that killed Becket. This is shown when, Becket says, "It is not right to turn ~~the house~~ a house of prayer into a fortress" which suggests that he welcomed the knights and therefore Henry as friends rather than ~~enemies~~^{enemies}.

The main bias in this eyewitness account comes from a "priest who tried to prevent the murder." This is ~~valuable~~^{useful} to the historian because it shows clearly what side the priest was on (Thomas Becket's) and adds a bias element to the statements in Source F. The fact that this priest was "the only one to stay close to the archbishop and held him in my arms" is valuable because it means only he was with Thomas Becket during the murder. However, he could have changed facts as he was the "only one" with the archbishop when he died.

Source G is a painting of the murder of Thomas Becket from a handwritten book by marks. It is useful to the historian because it is a painting of the actual murder of Becket. Also the fact that this book was handwritten means it wouldn't have been edited very much since it was written which gives it a purity that source F doesn't have as much.

On the other hand, it is a painting. This means it could have been painted specifically to represent the brutality of the killing. This is reflected in the provenance of the source where it says the book was 'handwritten by marks'. As marks are representative of the church, they would give an angle to the story unachievable from a ~~more~~ neutral perspective. Additionally, it was written in the 15th century which could be up to ^(or over) 300 years since the murder actually occurred. The information the painting portrays is fueled by secondary information passed on down the line and not first hand experiences. The painting shows the Henry's knights stabbing Becket several times which again emphasises the murder to be that of a 'bloody one', and that Henry II had no grace whatsoever.

In conclusion, Source F is more useful to the historian who is enquiring into the murder of Thomas Becket because it is an account from the murder itself. It is

from the perspective of an eyewitness. Although the eyewitness was a priest and a man of the Church, Christianity does not take sides but forgives and doesn't lie. With the influence of the Church at that time being so significant it influences me to think that this account is true and barely distorted. Source G was not full of enough enough information for the historian to draw some conclusions from as it was a secondary source and a painting. It could have even been deliberately drawn like that. That is why source F is more useful.



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Examiner Comments

A well developed Level 3 that uses both content and nature to explain the usefulness of both sources.



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Examiner Tip

Avoid simplistic responses such as this source is biased and has therefore no value at all.

Question 5

Question 5: Overwhelmingly the problem with answers to this question was the candidates' lack of knowledge of medieval sources. This came out clearest in the number of answers which gave anachronistic sources such as films, videos and photographs. Quite a few provided formulaic lists:

"To find evidence to support this you would have to look in books, newspaper articles, internet articles and TV documentaries..."

To be fair some candidates recognised that these kinds of sources were not around in the twelfth century:

It's also hard to find evidence supporting this as there were not a lot of sources around in that time such as videos and newspapers. Any evidence found today supporting this is mostly secondary sources and are the producers' interpretations not being extremely accurate or true.

Other sources cited were pictures and the ubiquitous diaries. Better answers did consider tapestries, church records, laws and death sentences and ambassador's reports.

On the whole students were better at considering the problems than providing possible sources and were duly rewarded for this. Although some just said sources would have been lost or destroyed, others considered difficulties in detail, using Source H to point out that if the King was generous in public and had his tantrums in private few would be witnesses and many would not record what they saw out of fear of him or because they were illiterate. Ambassadors were cited as useful because as foreign visitors sending secret despatches abroad, they would be safe from the King's anger. The deterioration of records was sometimes well considered:

Also finding other records will be difficult as these could've possibly been damaged by age or not kept well as these records would be 900 years old. Also historians would have a hard time acquiring them as they are probably well kept in amongst thousands of other records kept away in the church.

A continuing problem with this paper is the failure of candidates to recognise that historians have something to offer. As with Source C for Question 3, a large number considered Source H unreliable because it was written in 2007:

As it is a book which has been written many years after Henry II, this may mean that as it has not been written at the time of Henry II that it is not an accurate or reliable description.

It is true that a number of candidates do have a sense that historians can offer a valuable perspective on the past, that they have received a technical training in the reading of sources, and that they do research and weigh up their value, that they have the benefit of hindsight and of the work of other historians, but many still do not. Finally, it should be more widely recognised that medieval topics can be offered on this paper and the study of medieval sources should be undertaken by candidates studying "The work of the historian".

***5 Study Source H and use your own knowledge of the work of the historian.**

This source suggests that Henry II had an uncontrollable temper.

Explain the difficulties in finding evidence to support this and suggest other research the historian could do to check this claim about Henry II's character.

(16)

From studying source H I can infer that King Henry II had an unusual dual personality. I get this judgement from the fact he ~~was~~ appeared as "generous to the public" but also "often roll around the floor screaming and yelling".

The source was written and published in "1207" meaning it is second hand account of the King and his uncontrollable temper, the fact it is a second hand account means information will have come from a number of sources, of which portray different sides.

It is difficult to find evidence to support that the King had anger problems as many ~~be~~ people in the C12 would not have been educated so were illiterate and record their views of the King.

It is also difficult to find honest and reliable sources because

the people would have been scared to write things against the King as he had the power to have them killed. Therefore the King was hardly ever betrayed to have temper issues.

Another difficulty is that most people would not have seen this side of the King as source H say "He could appear polite calm and patient" only his closest advisors would have seen this.

From the other sources I have studied many talk about his "rage" and "anger" showing how this side of the King was witnessed.

It is also difficult as camera's and video were not around during this era meaning the King could never be captured during a "Volcanic" outburst.

There is also very little chance of a painting of these tempered events making it hard for historians to judge.

A historian could look at a diary entries made by the King # himself or close advisors, this would give a more reliable view as these entries would have been private and truthful.

A historian could also look at public events the king attended to see how he acted at them, a historians could look at death and prosecution records to see if the dates in which the King was in a bad temperal state meant more deaths among civilians due to tighter laws.

A historian would need to look at letters sent by the King and to the King to see if he mentioned feelings or anger.

In conclusion there are many limiting factors to finding out about the Kings uncontrollable temper as many types of sources are not available and sources that are need to be viewed to assess their reliability.



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Examiner Comments

Another good account that identifies a range of problems with a reasonable effort at suggesting possible solutions in terms of evidence.



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Examiner Tip

First identify the problems then suggest realistic solutions. Avoid learnt responses that might not be appropriate to the topic or period.

Paper Summary

Candidates would do well to:

- Read each question carefully and make sure your answer focuses on its requirements
- Make sure the responses to question 1 make clear inferences and support them with information in the source.
- Question 2 is the question about message or impression or why a source was made or spoken.
- Answers to Question 3 should make a judgement on levels of support provided by content and nature and cross reference between the three sources.
- Candidates should respond to question 4 with comment on both content and nature in making a judgement.
- Question 5 should make use of relevant sources and your own knowledge of the topic.

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Order Code UG032487 June 2012

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