

Examiner’s General Advice on Unit 3

In this A2 unit students are expected to demonstrate three particular skills:

- the ability to select, use and communicate accurate knowledge and understanding of the topic
- when giving a historical explanation, the ability to make a substantiated judgement, that is, a judgement that goes beyond mere assertion and is backed up by appropriate evidence
- the ability to interpret, evaluate and use a range of source material, both primary and secondary, and also explain and evaluate interpretations of the topics studied.

These skills are also **assessment objectives**. All questions will aim to test more than one of these objectives, and in an examination answer will be marked accordingly. On any given examination paper, there will be a planned balance of the various skills across questions to ensure that all are covered. However, individual questions or part questions will focus on certain skills, not necessarily all of them at once. One of the ways of writing an effective answer is therefore to learn to recognise the particular skill that is the focal point of a particular question. However, it is also important to remember that accurate knowledge and understanding are key elements in any A2 answer. Generalised statements showing, for example, a student’s awareness that one piece of evidence is less objective and more biased than another will not earn much credit. There must also be a clear indication of some background knowledge and understanding of the topic in addition to the ability to make comparisons and contrasts between the sources.

Unit 3 (options A–N) contain **three** essay questions, and candidates have to answer two of the three questions. One of the three questions will be a ‘breadth’ question, covering most or all of the chronological period.

AQA – A2 GCE The State and the People: Change and Continuity Unit 3 HIS3B	The Triumph of Elizabeth: Britain 1547–1603	QUESTION 1 (01)
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Examiner's Specific Advice

This question is testing several skills and also your knowledge of the topic; in this case the effectiveness of the rulers of England between 1547 and 1558. You are also required to provide a balanced historical explanation and to make a substantiated judgement of the so-called Mid-Tudor Crisis.

As always with an essay-type question, relevance is the key – your answer can be selective rather than comprehensive as long as you address the precise question. There should be direct relevance to the key words of the specific question, backed by secure understanding of the overall context of political developments in these years.

The key thing is not to narrate and describe, but to *use* your knowledge purposefully in order to explain and evaluate. You should also think about the length of your answer – a shorter, more coherent and controlled answer is *always* preferable to a longer, more detailed answer that is unfinished or lacking in clarity and accuracy. The amount of detail you include should take this into account and it should be selected to match your assessments. You may feel, for example, that one particular ruler was markedly more effective than the others, in which case it would be right to cover this aspect in greater depth. But you need to maintain a focus on the period as a whole.

Exemplar Question

1 (01) 'There was no "Mid-Tudor Crisis". During the reigns of Edward VI and Mary I, royal government was capable and effective.'

How justified is this view?

[45 marks]

Plan

- Introduction: outline the argument that will be presented, showing an awareness of the context of political developments, 1547 to 1558
- Organised paragraphs to support a balanced judgement of the extent to which there was, or was not, a 'Mid-Tudor Crisis' and of the effectiveness of government under Somerset, Northumberland and Mary
- Conclusion: resolve the debate between various perspectives showing consistency with the arguments presented in the introduction

Examiner's Exemplar Answer 1

There was a Mid Tudor Crisis. When Edward VI became King he was only a boy and he had to be looked after by powerful nobles, like Somerset and Northumberland. There was a lot of infighting between these nobles. Many of them ended up being executed. So there was not much capable and effective government in Edward VI's reign
(1).

(1) This beginning has direct relevance but lacks depth and balance.

Somerset spent most of his time fighting wars in Scotland. He was a good soldier but his wars ruined the royal finances. His policies also aroused rebellions such as Kett's rebellion in East Anglia. There was also a rush towards Protestant revolution in Edward's reign and this caused the Western Rebellion against the new prayer book (2).

Northumberland overthrew Somerset in 1549 and for a few years he did rule strongly and effectively. He ended the war against Scotland and France and he got the royal finances under control. But in 1553 he tried and failed to keep power after Edward VI died by making Jane Grey the new queen. Northumberland was executed, which is not a very capable or effective way of ruling (3).

Mary Tudor and her advisers were not very effective either. Making England Catholic again was alright but bringing the Pope back in and then marrying a Spanish Catholic was obviously not going to work out well. Burning more than 300 Protestants at the stake was also bound to make the Queen unpopular. So was losing Calais in 1558 (4).

Mary was unlucky she was too old to have children by the time she became queen and it was not her fault that England was affected by terrible plagues in her reign. But she was not a capable ruler and neither were men like Gardiner and Pole (5).

There really was a Mid Tudor Crisis between 1547 and 1558, with rebellions, religious hatred and many powerful nobles fighting with each other. It was only after Elizabeth became queen and surrounded herself with good ministers that England got over the crisis and became a stable country (6).

Examiner's Assessment

This is a deceptively effective answer. It is very brief and it lacks depth, both in evidence and comment. The written communication is too often simplistic and assertive. But the answer does have direct and sustained relevance to the key words of the question and it does cover efficiently the key

(2) This is an accurate summary of events but it is too descriptive and has only implicit links to the question.

(3) This paragraph has set out some relevant factors but lacks depth and balance.

(4) Good accurate evidence here but still very descriptive and lacking balance.

(5) This begins to show some balanced assessment but is not developed.

(6) A sensible and relevant conclusion, though rather too brief and flatly asserted.

events and personalities. It is a rather partial and one-sided answer, however, lacking awareness of other views. It merits Level 3 because of its consistent relevance and sound basic grasp of the question. It is easy to see how this approach, carried out with more substantial evidence and greater depth of evaluation and argument, might reach Level 4.

Examiner's Exemplar Answer 2

The so-called Mid Tudor Crisis was merely a series of problems caused by Henry VIII's failure to secure the succession. Because Edward VI came to the throne as a young boy in 1547 and then died young in 1553, the throne was taken over by Mary Tudor at an age when she was unlikely to have an adult heir before she died. This inevitably caused some political instability but the situation was never allowed to get out of control. From 1558, Elizabeth I established herself as Queen with remarkable speed and it became apparent that England was a stable monarchy, led by capable rulers (7).

Edward VI's rule was in the hands of two powerful nobles, Somerset and Northumberland, who were able to rely on an efficient royal council. Somerset was a popular ruler and a good military commander. He won several victories against the Scots and introduced a lot of social reforms to improve the lives of the peasantry. He was a poor administrator, however, and his policies ran into trouble in 1549, with two regional rebellions, and the council turned against him. Although he was removed from power in 1549, this did not mean he was a complete failure (8).

Somerset was actually set free and given a place on the royal council again in 1550, which shows there was a lot of continuity in the government. The man who overthrew Somerset, the Duke of Northumberland, was a ruthless and highly capable ruler, who skilfully extricated England from the war against Scotland and France and then brought the royal finances under strict control (9). The claims by historians like WRD Jones, who claim that England was plagued by 'weak government' at this time, are not justified (10).

(7) This is a direct and effective introduction, showing a good grasp of the issues in the question.

(8) Again, this is well written and deploys convincing evidence but might have been more closely linked to the specific question.

(9) This shows good analytical depth and is concisely expressed.

(10) A brief but effective reference to the views of historians.

Not only was Northumberland a very effective political operator, Edward VI was much more than a helpless child. He was highly educated with his own strong ideas on the need for radical religious change and he had direct influence on the Protestant reforms that were introduced, such as the Second Book of Common Prayer. If Edward had lived long enough to produce a healthy and legitimate heir, there would have been no question of crisis and instability (11).

It is true that the illness and premature death of Edward VI did produce a short-term crisis. Northumberland was panicked into a risky gamble that he could alter the succession to make Jane Grey queen. This failed and the plotters were all executed. There was also a brief Protestant rebellion led by Thomas Wyatt in 1554. This crisis was less damaging than it seemed. Mary Tudor's accession was generally very popular with the people and there was no major upheaval when she returned England to Catholicism (12).

It has been argued that Mary made disastrous mistakes by bringing England back under the obedience of Rome and by making an unpopular marriage with Philip of Spain but neither of these things caused a revolution or civil war. Mary's biggest 'mistake' was to be 38 years old by the time she married, with very limited prospects of producing an heir, certainly not an heir who would grow into adulthood before she died. Under Mary, the royal council continued to operate efficiently (13).

The traditional view of Mary is that she stupidly alienated the people by the mass burnings of heretics. This view, distorted by the later propaganda of Foxe's Book of Martyrs, is wildly exaggerated. There had been many burnings of religious dissidents in England before, under both Henry VIII and his father Henry VII. Compared with the continental Europe, Mary's persecutions were on a small scale. Her biggest failing was not lacking effective government but, like Edward VI, dying too soon (14).

If the theory of a deep and dangerous Mid Tudor Crisis is correct, the situation in England in 1558 should have been uncontrollable and explosive. It was not. Mary had already nominated her sister as heir to the throne. Elizabeth very rapidly established herself as Queen and reconciled the

(11) Good development of the argument, backed by selective evidence.

(12) Solid knowledge, relevant to the issues though not quite direct enough in response to the key words of the question.

(13) Secure evidence used to support a balanced assessment.

(14) Very skilful development of the argument, showing judgement.

rival religious and political factions. The relative ease with which Elizabeth achieved this between 1558 and 1563 shows that the whole idea of the Mid Tudor Crisis is an illusion (15).

(15) A confident well-written conclusion, consistent with the ideas argued throughout the answer.

Examiner Assessment

This is a very effective answer. It is confidently presented, and combines a clear, expert narrative with well-judged analysis and synoptic links throughout. The introduction is well matched to the conclusion. There is balance and an awareness of historical interpretations. The answer merits Level 5, rather than Level 4.

Mark Scheme

L1:

The answer shows only limited understanding of the question, with **either** some descriptive material only loosely linked to the focus of the question **or** with some explicit relevant comment but lacking accurate support. Skills of written communication will be weak.

[0–6 marks]

L2:

There will be some understanding of the needs of the question. The answer will be **either** primarily descriptive with few links to the question **or** will contain some relevant comment with very limited supporting knowledge. Historical interpretations may be described rather than used to illustrate an argument. The answer will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured.

[7–15 marks]

L3:

The answers will show good understanding of the demands of the question, with some assessment backed by relevant selected evidence, which may be lacking in depth. There will be some synoptic links although these may not be developed. There will be some understanding of varying interpretations and perspectives. Answers will be clearly expressed and show reasonable organisation.

[16–25 marks]

L4:

The answer will show a very good understanding of the demands of the question. There will be synoptic links between the ideas, arguments and information included, showing an overall historical understanding. There will be good understanding and use of different interpretations and perspectives and the answer will show judgement through balanced argument backed by a range of precisely selected evidence. The answer will be well organised and display good skills of written communication.

[26–37 marks]

L5:

The answer will show a full understanding of the demands of the question. The ideas, arguments and information included will be wide ranging, carefully chosen and closely interwoven to produce a sustained and convincing argument with a high level of synoptic links. Conceptual depth, independent judgement and mature understanding of historical debate will be displayed. Answers will be well structured and fluently written.

[38–45 marks]		
AQA – A2 GCE The State and the People: Change and Continuity Unit 3 HIS3B	The Triumph of Elizabeth: Britain 1547–1603	QUESTION 2 (02)

Examiner's Specific Advice

This synoptic question is testing your ability to deal with history in breadth as well as depth. The key words are 'religious stability' and 'for the rest of Elizabeth's reign'. It is important to cover the topic as a whole, with selected specific evidence, but it is not enough just to describe events – that might take much too long and in any case will earn relatively few marks. You need to provide a balanced argument which is a direct response to the question – perhaps strongly agreeing with the key quotation, perhaps refuting it conclusively, or perhaps offering a differentiated argument along the lines of 'up to a point but'. Make sure your answer is complete and controlled, reaching a focused conclusion.

Exemplar Question

2 (02) 'The Anglican Church Settlement of 1559 ensured religious stability in England for the rest of Elizabeth's reign.'

Assess the validity of this view.

[45 marks]

Plan

- Introduction: make clear what the issues are to be debated and how the overall argument of your answer will respond to the demands of the question
- Organised paragraphs to support your argument with precisely selected evidence, arranged either chronologically or thematically, carefully linked to the question
- Conclusion that is the logical outcome of what has gone before, *not* tacked on at the end as an afterthought – it is important to make up your mind about the conclusion before starting out on the essay!

Examiner's Exemplar Answer 1

The idea that there was religious stability throughout Elizabeth's reign is completely wrong. The Church Settlement of 1559 patched up the religious divisions in England for a time but never solved the underlying problems. The English Catholics remained unhappy and were never reconciled to Anglicanism. There were Catholic

threats to Elizabeth almost throughout her reign. There was also a lot of discontent from Puritans (1).

When Elizabeth became Queen in 1558, the country was badly divided over religion. In the reign of Edward VI there had been a lot of radical Protestant reforms that provoked strong opposition from the people, such as the Western Prayer Book Rebellion in 1549. Ordinary people hated the destruction of images and ornaments in churches and wanted the old ways. This is one reason why Mary Tudor was welcomed as Queen by ordinary people in 1553. In her reign, however, Mary went much too far by bringing back the Pope and marrying a Catholic Spanish prince, so there was a lot of opposition to her, too. The country was really divided (2).

Elizabeth wanted a compromise that would keep English control of the Church but not go too far away from the old religious traditions the people liked so much. In 1559, she passed the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Uniformity and brought back Cranmer's Protestant Book of Common Prayer. But she also allowed the return of priestly vestments and traditional Catholic church ceremonies. Elizabeth just wanted acceptance, she did not want another religious revolution. She even thought about marrying a Catholic prince in 1559, either Philip II or Archduke Charles (3).

The main problem was that the Church Settlement did not win over English Catholics and there were constant threats to Elizabeth from Catholics, backed by Spain and the Pope. The revolt of the Northern Earls in 1569 was one of the biggest threats. The Pope excommunicated Elizabeth in 1570 and there was the Ridolfi plot in 1571. There was a lot of underground resistance led by the Jesuits. Mary, Queen of Scots was a focus for Catholic plots all the time until she was executed in 1587 after the Babington Plot (4).

Even after that, Elizabeth was still in danger. Spain sent the Great Armada in 1588 and a second Armada in 1597. Spain also sent troops to Ireland to help Catholic rebellions there. So there was no religious stability. There were also growing troubles with Puritans towards the end of Elizabeth's reign. The Church Settlement of 1559 patched up religious divisions for a time but did not provide a lasting solution (5).

(1) This is a lively and relevant introduction, showing a good grasp of the demands of the question.

(2) This is an attempt to provide useful context but the comment and assessment is rather assertive and undeveloped.

(3) This is a sound paragraph, with bold statements supported by selected evidence, but limited depth of argument.

(4) There is accurate evidence here but it tends to be descriptive, without sufficient links to the idea of religious stability.

(5) This is quite a strong conclusion. It is consistent with the ideas in the introduction and has links to the question, though the reference to the Puritans adds little to the argument.

Examiner's Assessment

Overall the answer has strong opinions made relevant to the question but it is not a balanced or developed answer. There is a tendency to make sweeping assertions without supporting evidence and there is little indication that the candidate knows or understands much about the Puritans, although there is quite good awareness of the issues involved in the 1559 settlement. There is a relevant argument and some conceptual understanding here but the second half of the answer drifts away into an account of Catholic threats to Elizabeth. Overall, the answer merits Level 3.

Examiner's Exemplar Answer 2

The Elizabethan Church Settlement was one of the biggest successes of her whole reign. When Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, England was badly divided over matters of religion. Along with this, the question of the succession to the throne was a big problem. So there was major instability in both religion and politics. By 1603, however, England was religiously united and the succession from Elizabeth to James I went through safely. This shows how important the 1559 church settlement was (6).

At the start of her reign, nobody knew how successful Elizabeth would be. Edward VI's succession had been in doubt because he was a boy king, with powerful nobles competing to be his protector. The succession was even more disputed in 1553 because Edward declared both his sisters illegitimate. Mary Tudor only came to the throne after Northumberland's plot to make Jane Grey Queen failed and then she had to face Wyatt's Protestant rebellion. The succession was still a problem in 1558. Elizabeth was a young unmarried woman and many people doubted that she would be able to establish her authority as Queen. Giving England religious stability was absolutely vital for her (7).

Some historians, such as David Loades, have claimed that 'the shortness of Mary I's reign and the continuing unpopularity of the papacy made matters relatively straightforward' for Elizabeth but this underrates the dangers she faced. The view of

(6) This is a very good synoptic introduction, showing understanding of the question and awareness of the period as a whole.

(7) This is also an effective paragraph, offering balanced judgement of the issues in context and good, concise evidence on the background.

Diarmaid MacCulloch is much more convincing. He says 'another change in religion was inevitable. Elizabeth's known Protestant sympathies and her position as a semi-prisoner in Mary's reign made her the focus of Protestant hopes. But England's chief ally in Europe was the Catholic King of Spain'. That is why Elizabeth had to be so very careful and why she often concealed what she was really thinking (8).

Her Church Settlement was a Protestant one. She became Head of the Church and the Papacy was rejected. The Act of Uniformity demanded that Catholics conform to the Church of England. The Book of Common Prayer was restored. But Elizabeth avoided any radical measures. She was looking for outward conformity, not necessarily to win hearts and minds. Over the following years this was achieved (9).

It is often claimed that English Catholics were never won over and that there were continuing threats to Elizabeth from plots, Jesuits and foreign invasion but these threats were actually quite minor. The revolt of the Northern Earls did not gain national support and was soon crushed. The Pope's excommunication in 1570 strengthened Elizabeth rather than undermined her. Plots like the Ridolfi plot and the Babington plot were easily exposed and in any case Walsingham made them seem much more dangerous than they really were, for political reasons. English Catholics wanted to keep their religion but they had no wish to overthrow the state (10).

Similarly, there was no real danger from Puritans. Many radical Protestants were disappointed by the moderate church settlement of 1559 and there was a rise in Puritan activities. But they were never ready for any religious revolution, even when Archbishop Whitgift put them under pressure after 1583. Puritans were also pleased by Elizabeth's support for the Huguenots in the 1570s and her later backing for the Calvinist Dutch rebels against Spain. By the 1590s it was clear the Protestant succession was safe (11).

So there really was long-term religious stability. Yes there were Catholic plots, recusancy laws and some persecution of Puritans from time to time and a lot of moaning by Puritan MPs towards the end of the reign (greatly exaggerated by historians like J.E. Neale). Compared to the rest of Europe, for

(8) This paragraph shows secure knowledge of the views of historians, which are not merely described but used to support the answer.

(9) A brief but sufficient analysis of the actual settlement and the intentions behind it.

(10) This paragraph deploys accurate and selective knowledge, showing awareness of other views and culminating in a precise and well-differentiated link to the question.

(11) An effective paragraph, which pulls the arguments together and shows some perspective.

example the wars of religion in France, this was nothing. The Church Settlement was the foundation stone of Elizabeth’s long and stable reign (12).

(12) A neat conclusion that grows logically out of the arguments expressed throughout the answer.

Examiner’s Assessment

This is a strong, well-argued answer. The candidate shows depth and range of relevant knowledge, which is used confidently and selectively to support a direct and sustained response to the question. There is a lot of evaluation and balanced judgement, with very skilful use of the views of historians. The answer shows analytical depth and synoptic understanding of the period. It clearly merits Level 5.

Mark Scheme

L1:

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[0–6 marks]

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[16–25 marks]

L4:

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L5:

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[38–45 marks]

Chronology: Key Events in *The Triumph of Elizabeth: Britain 1547–1603*

- 1547** Death of Henry VIII and accession of Edward VI. Edward Seymour made Lord Protector and Duke of Somerset. Victories in the war against Scotland.
- 1548** Radical Protestant reforms encouraged by Edward VI. Commissions sent round the country by Somerset to investigate peasant grievances.
- 1549** Execution of Thomas Seymour for plotting against his brother, Somerset. Book of Common Prayer issued. Kett's rebellion. Western rebellion. Somerset deposed by the Earl of Warwick (Northumberland).
- 1550** Somerset pardoned and restored to the King's Council. Peace treaty to end war against Scotland and France.
- 1551** Success of Northumberland's policies to stabilise the royal finances.
- 1552** Execution of Somerset. Cranmer's Second Book of Common Prayer introduced.
- 1553** Marriage of Northumberland's son to Lady Jane Grey. Declaration by Edward VI that Jane Grey is his true heir and that his sisters Mary and Elizabeth are both illegitimate. Death of Edward VI. Mary Tudor proclaimed Queen. Execution of Northumberland.
- 1554** Execution of Jane Grey. Failed Protestant rebellion led by Thomas Wyatt. Marriage of Mary I and Philip of Spain. The Church in England restored to obedience to the Pope.
- 1555** Elizabeth named as Mary's heir. Burnings of Protestants including bishops Latimer and Ridley. Philip leaves Mary and returns to Spain.
- 1556** Burning of Archbishop Cranmer.
- 1558** Loss of Calais to France. Death of Mary Tudor and accession of Elizabeth I.
- 1559** Anglican Church Settlement. Elizabeth's rejection of marriage to Philip II.
- 1560** Treaty of Edinburgh.
- 1562** Recovery of Elizabeth from life-threatening illness.
- 1563** Publication of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.
- 1566** Recall of Parliament. Demands for Elizabeth to marry to secure the succession.
- 1568** Mary Queen of Scots placed under house arrest in England, following her abdication as Queen of Scotland.

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- 1569** Failed revolt of the Northern Earls. Defeat of John Hawkins at San Juan de Ulloa.
- 1570** Elizabeth I excommunicated by the Pope.
- 1571** Ridolfi plot to assassinate Elizabeth. Negotiations for marriage to Duke of Anjou.
- 1572** Duke of Norfolk executed for treason. Promise by Elizabeth to defend Huguenots.
- 1575** Elizabeth's refusal to accept the offer to be Queen of the Netherlands.
- 1579** Failed negotiations concerning the Alencon marriage. Rebellion in Ireland.
- 1580** Return of Francis Drake from his three-year voyage round the world.
- 1581** Execution of the Jesuit Edmund Campion. Harsh anti-Catholic laws passed.
- 1583** Increased pressure on Puritans after Whitgift made Archbishop of Canterbury.
- 1585** Treaty of Nonsuch. Foundation of English colony in Virginia.
- 1586** Exposure of Babington plot and trial of Mary Queen of Scots.
- 1587** Execution of Mary Queen of Scots.
- 1588** Defeat of the Spanish Armada. Death of Robert Dudley.
- 1590** Death of Francis Walsingham.
- 1596** Rebellion in Ireland. Oxfordshire rising after series of bad harvests.
- 1598** Reform of the Poor Law. Death of William Cecil, Lord Burghley.
- 1601** Failed rebellion by Earl of Essex and his execution. Completion of new Poor Law.
- 1603** Death of Elizabeth and succession of James I.

Teaching Activities

- For each of the five candidates to marry Elizabeth I, note down when and why he was in contention for marriage, and how various political groups in England responded to each one.

	Philip II of Spain	Archduke Charles of Austria	Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester	The Duke of Anjou	The Duke of Alencon
When?					
Why?					
Queen Elizabeth					
Cecil and Court advisers					
Parliament					
English Catholics					

- You are a diplomat asked by William Cecil to report on relations between England and Spain in 1569, just after the defeat of John Hawkins at San Juan de Ulloa. Make a list of reasons why it is desirable, and possible, to avoid war with Spain.
- For each of the four ministers to Elizabeth – Robert Dudley, William Cecil, Francis Walsingham and Robert Cecil – list up to five achievements and up to five failures. Using these lists as evidence, place them in rank order of success and importance.

Additional Sample questions

- To what extent was England transformed into a Protestant country during the reign of Edward VI? **[45 marks]**
- 'Elizabeth I's foreign policies were much more successful in peace than in war.' Assess the validity of this view. **[45 marks]**

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