



History 7042
Specimen Question Paper 1D (A-level)
Question 02 Student 1
Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.0

Specimen answer plus commentary

The following student response is intended to illustrate approaches to assessment. This response has not been completed under timed examination conditions. It is not intended to be viewed as a 'model' answer and the marking has not been subject to the usual standardisation process.

Paper 1D (A-level): Specimen question paper

02 To what extent were disputes over religion, in the years 1603 to 1625, due to James I?

[30 marks]

Student response

James was a source of religious disputes in the years 1603 to 1625. There were, however, also other reasons for disputes over religion in the period. The role of Puritans and Catholics created tension as elements of both threatened the authority of the monarch as Supreme Governor. The development of Arminianism after 1618 also meant that religion was an even more difficult issue for the monarch to deal with. Overall James' pragmatic approach to religion helped to ensure that religious disputes, while more problematic after 1618 because of their interaction with foreign policy, finance as well as Crown-Parliament relations, did not escalate as much as they could have.

Religion was an issue for James even before he arrived in London from travelling from Scotland in 1603. The Puritans who presented James with the Millenary Petition calling on him as Supreme Governor for further reformation of the Church of England immediately indicated how problematic religion and the various religious groups could be for James as the new King of England. From the other extreme the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 showed James an even more direct threat he could face from Catholics. In many ways whatever James did in religion would never stop there being disputes with the more hardline Puritans and Catholics unless they achieved the church they wanted.

In the short term, however, James' pragmatic approach to religion enabled him to deal effectively with the disputes caused by both Puritans and Catholics. Through the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 James indicated clearly to Puritans the limits of reform that they could expect from the new monarch. James clearly saw the church as a prop to order and his authority, hence his staged 'no bishop, no king'. James reinforced that he would not accept any disputes over religion through Bancroft's Canons of 1605 and the Oath of Allegiance in 1606.

James actually lessened the chance of disputes over religion, however, by seeking to maintain the Jacobethan balance and making clear that while he had set boundaries his general approach to both Puritans and Catholics was that although he 'hated extremes' he was willing to pragmatically accept a degree of diversity in the church as this would keep a broad Protestant church and therefore allow the majority to feel that they could conform, even if it was just outwardly. Similarly James was willing to accept closet or quiet Catholics as long as they outwardly conformed and posed no direct threat to his authority. James also gave the Puritans the 1611 Authorised Version, or King James Bible. James approach of pragmatism and engagement ensured that much that could have caused religious disputes was headed off.

Religion became more problematic for James after 1618. The outbreak of the Thirty Years War and the development of Arminianism meant that religion was at the centre of the foreign policy, finance and parliamentary disputes of 1621 to 1625. Religion caused disputes became many of

the Political Nation wanted James to intervene on the Protestant side in the European conflict, even if they were not prepared to pay for it. James, however, sought to cement his self-image as Rex Pacificus through his policy of the Spanish Match and to facilitate this he promoted anti-Calvinist Arminians such as Lancelot Andrewes who not only supported his policy but also reassured the Catholic Spanish. The constitutional dispute of 1621 over the Commons Protestation could be said to be rooted in different religious mentalities and concern that James's willingness to engage with Catholics abroad seemed to be mirrored by a shift to the anti-Calvinist Arminians at home who many Protestants, but especially the Puritans, regarded as little more than Catholics.

Religion as central to seventeenth century life and with the complexities of religious diversity across his three kingdoms was always going to create disputes for James. In this context he handled the demands of Puritans, Catholics and Arminians well. James did this by recognising that the Political Nation was, on the whole conservative and Anglican and essentially wanted the preservation of order. By maintaining a broad Protestant church and an open dialogue with all James made the majority feel that they could at least outwardly conform and this reduced religious disputes. Despite the increase in tension after 1618 James recognised the need to adapt his approach after the failure of the 1623 Madrid Trip. While his gradual shift towards Arminians had created more religious disputes his broad and pragmatic approach to religion meant that when he died in 1625 the underlying religion tensions inherent in early modern had not developed as a serious threat to his authority as Supreme Governor. The approach of Charles I in breaking the Jacobethan balance in the remainder of the 1620s indicates how well James actually prevented disputes over religion.

Commentary – Level 5

This response displays a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. It is clearly organised around a generally chronological structure but within this clear paragraphs that support the illustration of the points being made directly on the specific wording of the question. Illustrative context is used precisely for analysis rather than being too narrative driven. The selective use of context indicates a real depth of knowledge. The response also indicates a depth of conceptual understanding through its use of terminology appropriately as part of analysis.