



A-level HISTORY

Component 1J The British Empire, c1857–1967

Friday 23 May 2025 Morning

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 16-page answer book.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is 7042/1J.
- Answer **three** questions.
In **Section A** answer Question 01.
In **Section B** answer **two** questions.

Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
 - use good English
 - organise information clearly
 - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Advice

- You are advised to spend about:
 - 1 hour on Question 01 from **Section A**
 - 45 minutes on each of the **two** questions answered from **Section B**.

Section A

Answer Question 01.

Extract A

Decolonisation was primarily an economic decision. After World War Two, Britain found itself in an economically weakened position and it recovered less quickly than other European countries. This weakness was compounded by the success of the economic integration of the West European countries in the 1950s which led to the British government and business becoming isolated. International trade was bypassing British economic interests. This led to anxiety about Britain's place in the world system. The productivity of British industry, cushioned for so long by the Empire, fell increasingly behind that of its continental competitors. Britain had also become increasingly pessimistic about the prospects of economically developing the poorer colonies, and it was clear that these countries would continue to become more dependent on Britain. There soon became a desire to rid Britain of its responsibilities to the colonies, and this lay behind Macmillan's decision to accelerate decolonisation in Africa in the 1960s.

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Adapted from RF Holland, *European Decolonisation 1918–1981*, 1985

Extract B

After World War Two, there were signs that even a rebranded British Empire had only limited prospects. The Cold War changed the international situation. On the one hand, it was bound to make Britain a valuable ally to the United States. But, on the other, the Americans became more willing to see pro-independence nationalists in colonies as potential allies against communism. They were less happy to be seen as the friends of Britain, an old-fashioned imperialist power, as that might encourage nationalist leaders to look east towards Moscow. This situation helped to motivate nationalist leaders, like the Gold Coast's Kwame Nkrumah, to reject attempts by Britain to keep its colonies within a west-leaning association. This was the setting in which the Suez crisis exploded in 1956. This revealed that Britain had lost the capacity to act alone without approval from Washington. Britain lacked the financial resources, military power and political leverage to sustain an empire and throughout the post-war period this was proven as colony after colony gained its independence.

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Adapted from J Darwin, *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain*, 2013

Extract C

An unintended consequence of Britain's attempted economic development of its colonies was that colonial workers were able to mass together in factories and towns. In cities, people from different backgrounds could meet together and exchange ideas and discuss grievances. This made them more prone than peasants scattered in fields to dissent and rebel, something that the British were powerless to stop. The British were right to fear this, as it was in the towns that nationalism flourished. These new national liberation movements became more aggressive towards Britain from the late 1940s onwards, taking encouragement from India in 1947 and the tide of world opinion which seemed to be with them. British efforts to defeat the nationalist movements resulted in the use of oppressive measures and several atrocities. This undermined the old basis of British colonial rule, and it soon became apparent that Britain could no longer hold onto its empire. Britain, by the late 1960s, had been driven out of its colonies, and the Empire was no more.

Adapted from B Porter, *The Lion's Share: A Short History of British Imperialism 1850–2004*, 2004

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Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these three extracts are in relation to British decolonisation in the years 1947 to 1967.

[30 marks]

Turn over for Section B

Section B

Answer **two** questions.

0 2

'British policy towards Egypt, in the years 1875 to 1898, was driven by economic concerns.'

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

0 3

In the years 1890 to 1914 the actions of indigenous people in India posed a significant challenge to British rule.

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

0 4

To what extent did economic relations between Britain and its empire change in the years 1919 to 1947?

[25 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

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