

National Qualifications

Describe, Explain, To What Extent and How Fully questions



When you are doing the **Describe** and **Explain** questions in the exam, it is very important to **watch your time**. Aim to complete them in about 7 minutes. Do not write for longer than that or you will be taking away time from your other questions.

In the '**To What Extent**' question, organise your information into a balanced answer, such as writing: *It is true to say Martin Luther King was important in.....However there are other factors which could be argued were more important such as the power of the media.*

In the '**How fully**' questions, you will never get a source that gives you the full story so it's up to you to state that the source only partly explains or describes the event/development, but there is more information needed to give the full explanation. This is where you then provide your recall to fill the gaps.

Demonstrating knowledge and understanding in the Describe and Explain questions

In the **Describe (5 or 6 marks)** questions, you must:

- **Describe what happened OR**
- **Describe the effects of an event or development**

The Describe question is out of 5 or 6 marks. Therefore you will have to:

- provide 5 or 6 pieces of your own knowledge (recall as it is known). There is no source to help you, so you will have to know your stuff.

- the recall you provide must be relevant to the question
- the recall must be correct and accurate
- the recall points don't have to be in any order
- you can provide 5 or 6 straightforward points or a smaller number of developed points (or a combination of both)

You will be awarded:

1 mark for each accurate relevant point
a second mark for any point that is developed.

In the **Explain (5 or 6 marks)** questions, you must:

- **Explain why something happened by showing connections between factors or relationships between events or ideas.**

The Explain question is out of 5 or 6 marks. Therefore you will have to:

- provide 5 or 6 pieces of your own knowledge (recall as it is known). There is no source to help you, so you will have to know your stuff.

- the recall you provide must be relevant to the question
- the recall must be correct and accurate
- the recall points must explain why something happened
- you can provide 5 or 6 straightforward reasons or a smaller number of developed reasons (or a combination of both)
- There is no need to evaluate these reasons or prioritise them in any order.

You will be awarded:

1 mark for each accurate relevant point
a second mark for any reason that is developed.

For these questions the examiner is looking to see if you can do the following things

- **Understand the question** which will ask you to describe or explain key historical developments and events you have studied.
- Provide **recalled knowledge** which is accurate and relevant.

Example answer for an **Explain**
question

Explain why Edward was able to interfere in Scottish affairs?

There are several reasons why Edward was able to interfere in Scots affairs after the death of Alexander III.

Edward was able to interfere in Scots affairs because Bishop Fraser wrote to him on hearing of Margaret's death asking him to come to the border to help choose the next king (1). He was also able to interfere because he appeared as a friend to the Guardians who thought he could help to stop a civil war starting in Scotland (1).

Another reason Edward was able to interfere in Scots affairs was because the Scots had earlier agreed to the Marriage of Margaret and Edward's son in the Treaty of Birgham(1). The Scots trusted Edward because he was Margaret's great uncle and was a legal expert (1). They had no reason to suspect he was trying to take control of Scotland but that was what Edward was hoping to achieve.(1)

Therefore Edward was able to interfere in Scots affairs because he offered to help the Scots who in turn had little reason to distrust him.

Example answer for a **Describe**
question

Describe the main arguments used in the Great Cause about who should be King of Scots?

Although there were 13 competitors there were three main arguments in the Great Cause about who should be King of Scots.

John Balliol claimed he had the strongest claim because he was descended from the eldest daughter of David, Earl of Huntingdon (1). This is called primogeniture. (1) Robert Bruce claimed that he should be King because he was the grandson of David, Earl of Huntingdon so he was a generation closer to than John Balliol (1). John of Hastings also a descended of David, Earl of Huntingdon said that Scotland should be divided equally among the 3 claimants (1). Edward decided that Balliol should be King because he had the strongest claim (1).

Demonstrating knowledge and understanding in the 'To what extent..' questions

In the '**To what extent..**' (8 mark) question, you must:

- write a balanced answer
- decide how important a particular factor was in explaining why something happened and then consider the extent to which other factors contributed to the event or development, or to its impact.
- include at least 5 relevant, factual, key points of knowledge to support the factors
- based on the evidence you present, give your own judgement in a short conclusion which sums up your answer to the question
- give a reason(s) to explain why you came to this conclusion

You will be awarded :

- **5 marks** for each relevant, factual, key points of knowledge used to support the factors, 1 mark for each given point
- **If only one factor is presented, then a maximum of 3 marks will be given for relevant points of knowledge.**
- A further **3 marks** will be given for presenting the answer in a structured way and coming to a reasoned conclusion, as follows:
 - **1 mark** for the answer being presented in a structured way, with knowledge being organised in support of different factors.
 - **1 mark** for a valid judgement or overall conclusion
 - **1 mark** for a reason being provided in support of the conclusion

Here is an example answer:

Question

'To what extent did people leave the Highlands in the 19th Century because of potato blight ?' (8 marks)

Answer

People left the Highlands in the 19th Century because of many reasons, not just because of potato blight.

The failure of the Kelp Industry meant that many families were left with no money or not much food coming into the house. It took quite some time to persuade the people to plant potatoes, but once they started using them as their main source of food they became dependent on them. (1 mark KU) Devastation struck though when for quite a number of years the crops were diseased with Blight. With the potato crop

destroyed many Scots struggled to find food and saw their profits disappear. (1 mark KU) Consequently many Scots could not afford to pay their rent and were evicted. (1 mark KU) This led to many people leaving the Highlands to other parts of Scotland and the world to avoid starvation, homelessness and poverty. However, there were other reasons to explain Highland emigration such as the Clearances. (1 mark for structure)

Landowners didn't normally seem to treat their tenants very well. A lot of people couldn't afford the rent, so they paid it in food. When the Landowners were made an offer by Southern Sheep Farmers to bring in the Black Face sheep, they couldn't refuse because the farmers were willing to pay much more rent than the people already living there. (1 mark KU) This led to more evictions and more Scots leaving the Highlands. Some Landowners paid for their tenants to emigrate to America or Canada. (1 mark KU) Sir James Matheson who owned the Isle of Lewis at this time, did this, and also gave them extra money to start a new life in another country.

Other Landowners, however, were not so kind. It was heard of for the people to be rounded up by men and dogs and tied up and thrown on a ship. When these people reached Canada, they had nothing apart from the rags they wore which would never keep them warm in the harsh Canadian winter. (1 mark KU)

All the people who emigrated were not all forced out though. Many people left because they wanted to, because they thought they would have a better and easier life somewhere else. (1 mark KU) Not everyone who left the Highlands left Scotland. Many people started working seasonally in the big cities and gradually began working permanently. They realised that working in a big house on the South would be far more comfortable than working on the croft all day, so many people moved to Edinburgh and Glasgow as well. (1 mark KU)

Steamships and railways were invented and developed. This made emigration easier. (1 mark KU) Some Highlanders took this opportunity and went to start a new life in places like Australia. Now they could also travel across the west of America to farm the land. Before railways it was tough to trek across America in wagons. They would have land and cattle to farm and they would receive an income. (1 mark KU) This life was better than the one in the Highlands.

In conclusion, many people left the highlands at this time in search of food, homes, and generally a better life. (1 mark for an overall conclusion) The failure of Kelp and potato blight caused great hardship as did high rents and evictions. Landlords were making better

profits with sheep on their land and hence cleared many Scots. Many Scots also migrated within Scotland to find work. However, most Scots would have travelled to find better opportunities such as land, cattle and income in foreign countries. (1 mark for a reason in support of the conclusion)

You can see that the 'To what extent..' question requires an answer of a few paragraphs to get the 8 marks and you should take about 12 - 15 minutes when answering it.

You can also see from the above example, it is quite easy to gather up marks for KU as long as you provide more than one factor.

Demonstrating knowledge and understanding in the 'How fully..' ' questions

In the 'How fully' (5 or 6 marks) question, you must:

- begin your answer by showing you understand that the source does not fully explain the issue raised in the question.
- select information from the source which is relevant to the question - usually there will be three points of relevant information in the source for you to find and use
- use recall that is accurate and relevant to make your answer more balanced

You will be awarded :

- **up to 3 marks** for the identification of points from the source that supports their judgement ,(i.e. your judgement being: the source doesn't fully describe.... The source only mentions....) **Each point from the source needs to be interpreted rather than simply copied from the source.**
- **up to 4 marks** for adding significant points, from your own knowledge, which the source fails to mention that support your judgement and is relevant to the question.
- **a maximum of 2 marks will be given for answers in which no judgements has been made, (i.e. you fail to state in an opening sentence that the source only partially explains/describes.....)**

Here is an example answer:

Source B explains the importance of the Montgomery Bus Boycott fairly well but doesn't mention some other important points.

The Source mentions that the boycott lasted for over a year, with many black Americans helping each other. (1 mark) It also mentions the bus companies were running out of money and suffering financially. (1 mark) Finally, it mentions that the buses were desegregated. (1 mark)

However, the source fails to mention how much media attention the boycott received which helped the cause. (1 mark recall) It also doesn't mention it was the first success of the non-violent protest movement. (1 mark recall) Martin Luther King emerged as the spokesperson of the Civil Rights movement as a result of the boycott. (1 mark recall) The success of the boycott proved to many black Americans that if they stuck together and protested in a non-violent manner then they could end segregation and improved their lives.