

Annex B

Essay Question: “The formation of the Alliance Party brought about the end of British rule in Malaya.” How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

Students’ comfort in using causal vocabulary - e.g. root cause vs catalyst

“In conclusion, I think that WW2 was a more important factor that brought about the end of British rule because it was the root cause for greater anti-colonial sentiments. While the formation of the Alliance Party contributed significantly to fuel British’s withdrawal, WW2 was the main event where anti-colonial sentiments stemmed from, and locals’ desire to be independent became more apparent. Hence WW2 is a more important factor as it was what motivated and gave locals a more urgent need to take action, whereas the formation of the Alliance merely sped up the process of decolonisation.”

Students’ understanding of turning point: weak political movements in Malaya prior to WW2

“I disagree with this statement as the success of the Alliance Party in bringing about independence was founded on anti-colonial sentiments, which was brought about by World War II. Pre-WWII, nationalist movements and political parties independent of the British were weak and often did not gain any traction. It was only after World War II that a national awakening in desire for self-rule occurred, which contributed to the rise in local political involvement and leading eventually to the formation of the Alliance. The strong, credible leadership of the Alliance stemmed from the events of WW2, thus bringing about the end of British rule in Malaya.”

Sample extracts from students’ essays which show their ability to undertake higher-order thinking and to refer to historical concepts of causation as well as change and continuity.