

2.8 Causation in the Age of Reformation and the Wars of Religion

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to write **causation** answers for the Reformation era.

You must be able to:

- separate doctrinal, political, technological and social causes
- argue for a most important cause against a named rival
- use a counterfactual test to rank causes
- concede what a rival cause explains better

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Four kinds

Doctrinal: the content of the claims. **Political:** rulers' interests. **Technological:** printing. **Social:** existing grievance and literacy. A strong answer names at least three.

■ The counterfactual test

Ask: without this cause, would the outcome have occurred? Without printing, reform arguments circulate slowly; without princely support, they are suppressed. Both tests point to necessity, which is why ranking needs a criterion beyond necessity alone.

■ Concede

If you argue printing was decisive, concede that printing alone would have spread arguments that no ruler protected. Naming what your cause cannot do is what makes the ranking an argument.

2 Practice

2.1 Name four kinds of cause relevant to the Reformation.

[2]

2.2 State the counterfactual test and one limit of it. [2]

2.3 You argue that political support was the most important cause.

(a) State the rival you must answer. [1]

(b) State what you would concede to it. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A counterfactual test asks whether the outcome would have occurred [1]

- **A** sooner
- **B** without the cause
- **C** elsewhere
- **D** later

3.2 Naming what your preferred cause cannot explain [1]

- **A** weakens the answer
- **B** turns the ranking into an argument
- **C** is irrelevant
- **D** is a narrative

3.3 Two causes both pass the counterfactual test.

(a) State what this shows. [1]

(b) Explain what criterion could then rank them. [2]

Solutions

2.1 doctrinal, political, technological, social.

2.2 ask whether the outcome would have occurred without the cause; the limit is that several causes may each be necessary, so necessity alone does not rank them.

2.3 (a) printing, or the doctrinal content itself. (b) a real concession, e.g. that without printed vernacular argument there would have been nothing for rulers to protect.

3.1 B. removal of the cause is the test.

3.2 B. it shows a criterion is being applied.

3.3 (a) that both were necessary. (b) a further criterion such as which cause was scarcer, or which explains the timing and geography, since necessity alone cannot discriminate.