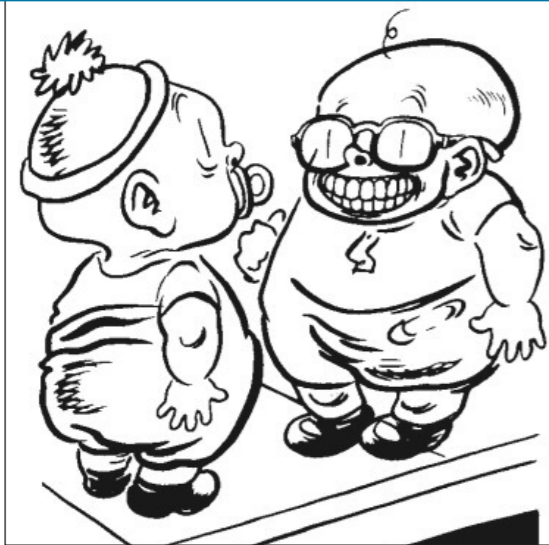


Key Topic 4: Labour in Power 1945-51

10

Labour comes to power

Source A: A cartoon published in the *Daily Mail*, 24 August 1948. The caption read 'Absolutely free – but you'd better get cracking before the supplies run out'



Task

Study Source A and use your own knowledge. What was the purpose of this cartoon? Use details from the cartoon and your own knowledge to explain your answer. (Remember how to answer this type of question? For guidance, see page 00.) ?

Source A: Sergeant Ernie Teal, Coldstream Guards, recalling 1944–45 in an interview in 1989

When we got to Holland we went to some of those houses in Nijmegen – flush toilets, nice gardens, they were just ordinary people but so much better off than we were. I was flabbergasted. And when we got to Germany I thought 'these people have been living well even under Adolf and I don't like Adolf.' I got ambitious. We (Britain) owned two thirds of the world and we lived worse off than them.

Task

Study Source A. What can you learn from Source A about the expectations of British soldiers at the end of the war? (Remember how to answer this type of question? For guidance, see page 00)

This key topic examines the Labour government in power from 1945–51. It starts by looking at the reasons behind the Labour election victory in 1945 before going on to examine how the new government implemented the recommendations of the **Beveridge Report**, which attacked the 'Five Giants'. It finishes by considering the establishment and operation of the National Health Service in 1948 and its impact in the years 1948–51.

Each chapter explains a key issue and examines important lines of enquiry as outlined below.

Chapter 10 Labour comes to power (pages 89–98)•

What were the key features of the 1945 general election campaign?

- Why did the Labour Party win the general election?

Chapter 11 Responding to Beveridge Report: the attack on 'want' (pages 99–104)

- Why was the Beveridge Report drawn up?
- What were the recommendations of the Beveridge Report?

Chapter 12 The National Health Service (pages 105–111)

- What were the main provisions of the National Health Act, 1946?
- Why was there opposition to the act from the medical profession?
- What impact did the National Health Service have on the people of Britain in the years 1948–51?

The war officially ended in Europe on 8 May 1945 and there were tremendous celebrations across the whole of Britain. Politicians began to think about a general election. On 21 May 1945, at the Labour Party conference, it was decided to reject Winston Churchill's suggestion that any election be postponed until the end of the war with Japan. Churchill formed a caretaker administration in preparation for the general election, which was set for 5 July. There had been a distinct move to the left in politics and many of the coalition government's wartime policies made people want a more socially just and fair society. A survey for the Ministry of Information in 1942 showed that people thought that things would be different and better after the war – after all, government propaganda had encouraged sacrifice with the prospect of a better future. What no one saw was the victory of the Labour Party.

This chapter answers the following questions:

- What were the key features of the 1945 general election campaign?
- Why did the Labour Party win the general election?

Examination skills

In this chapter you will be given guidance on how to answer the hypothesis testing question, which is worth sixteen marks.

What were the key features of the 1945 general election campaign?

The general election in 1945 was the first to be held in Britain since 1935 and several million people were voting for the first time. The electorate was about 33 million and about 24 million people voted. The Labour Party had not held office since 1931 and political differences had created huge divisions within it during the Depression. It had recovered slowly during the 1930s but won only 154 seats in the 1935 election (the Conservatives won 432). There was still a fear of Labour's socialist nature and many people continued to raise the spectre of the creation of a communist state if Labour were ever to win a majority of seats. (Labour's two periods of office in 1924 and 1929–31 had been **minority governments**.)

In 1945 each of the two main parties published a **manifesto** indicating the policies they would follow if they were elected. Many of the policies were similar but Labour embraced the Beveridge Report

(see Chapter 11) and said they would implement its recommendations immediately. The Conservatives were more careful about setting time limits.

The Conservatives had an aggressive election campaign that tried to smear the Labour Party but this turned out to be counter-productive. When the election campaign began, it was anticipated that the Conservatives would win. Their main weapon was Churchill and he was well received wherever he went. However, in his first election broadcast (see Source D), he made a critical error of judgement, which, many felt, lost the Conservatives many votes. The broadcast became known as the 'Gestapo speech'. Some felt Churchill had misjudged the electorate because he was simply saying that the Labour politicians such as Clement Attlee and Ernest Bevin – Churchill's colleagues of several years in the coalition government – were no longer to be trusted.

Source A: Manifestos of the Labour and Conservative parties

	Conservative Party	Labour Party
Manifesto title	<i>Mr Churchill's declaration of policy to the electors</i>	<i>Let us face the future</i>
Main policies	Comprehensive insurance scheme National Health Service Full employment Education improvements Housing improvements	Comprehensive insurance scheme National Health Service to be set up immediately Full employment Education improvements Housing improvements Nationalisation of the Bank of England, coal and power, transport, iron and steel to be carried out immediately. This policy would guarantee many jobs
Comment	The Conservative manifesto emphasised the need for continuity under Churchill. Conservative posters also showed their reliance on Churchill. Though Churchill spoke of a clear plan, it seemed as if many policies were just hopes and not definite.	The Labour Manifesto stressed planning, reconstruction and equality – all policies that people had come to recognise during the war. Labour's campaign did not mention any personalities. Furthermore, the Labour manifesto showed that it would implement the Beveridge Report more quickly than the Conservatives. The Labour manifesto put forward the idea of 'Never again' – a phrase that had many meanings – not only it refer to war but also to the poverty and unemployment of the 1930s.

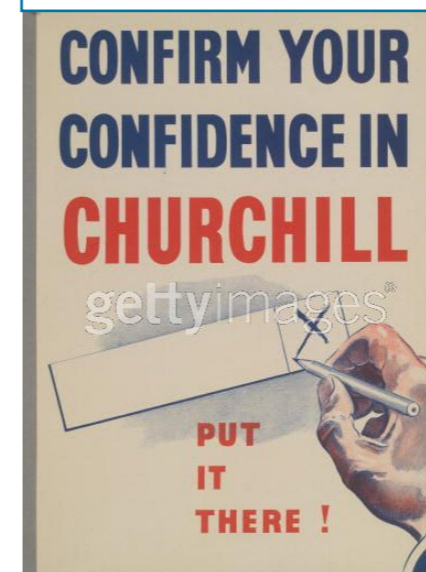
Source B: A Labour Party campaign poster, 1945



The radio broadcasts for each party attracted huge audiences and the public meetings were extremely well attended. Public interest in politics and international events had grown during the war and the electorate was aware of the key issues facing Britain. Voting began on 5 July and ended on 19 July – this was to permit soldiers serving overseas to vote.

The election results were declared on 26 July 1945. Labour had won a landslide victory. Some of the Labour leaders had not expected this and had booked their summer holidays, which then had to be cancelled.

Source C: A Conservative Party campaign poster, 1945



Source D: Winston Churchill's radio broadcast, 4 June 1945

No socialist government conducting the entire life and industry of the country could afford to allow free, sharp, or violently worded expressions of public discontent. They would have to fall back on some form of Gestapo, no doubt very humanely directed in the first instance ... And this would nip opinion in the bud; it would stop criticism as it reared its head, and it would gather all the power to the supreme party and the party leaders, rising like stately pinnacles above their vast bureaucracies of civil servants, no longer servants and no longer civil.

Source E: Table of results in the 1945 general election

Party	Seats	Percentage of seats in parliament	Percentage of votes cast	Percentage increase/decrease on 1935 election
Labour	395	61.7	48.1	+10.4
Conservative and Ulster Unionist	215	33.6	40.1	-13.9
Liberals	12	1.9	9.0	+0.8
Liberals	18	3.4	2.8	

Tasks

1. Study Source A. The policies of the two parties look very similar. What made the Labour Party more attractive to the voters?
2. How useful are Sources B and C as evidence of the campaigns of the Conservative and Labour parties in 1945? Explain your answer, using Sources B and C and your own knowledge. (Remember how to answer this type of question? For guidance, see page 00.)
3. Study Source D. What was it that Churchill disliked about socialism?
4. Write a newspaper headline attacking Churchill's speech in Source D. (Avoid the use of the word 'Gestapo'.)
5. What can you learn from Source E about the general election result?

Why did the Labour Party win the general election?

Wartime experiences

During the war, the Labour Party was fortunate to have some of its leading figures as key government ministers. Clement Attlee, the Labour leader, was Churchill's deputy and was frequently in charge of the country when Churchill was away on

important meetings. Ernest Bevin (Minister of Labour) and Herbert Morrison (Home Secretary and Minister for Home Security) held vital posts. These three men were crucial to the final victory and they became household names during the war. Furthermore, because the coalition

Source A: A cartoon published in the *Daily Mirror* on Victory in Europe (VE) Day, 8 May 1945



“Here you are! Don't lose it again!”

government followed ‘war socialism’ whereby the state controlled most industries and more importantly had a great say in the everyday life of its citizens, the fear that many people had about the **socialist policies** of the Labour Party now began to evaporate. There had been an acceptance of Labour's ideas and many people wanted them to be adopted after the war.

Evacuation

Evacuation (see pages 00–00) proved to be an eye-opener for many people. Not only were ordinary rural people surprised at the poverty of the urban children sent to live with them but many middle-class citizens were horrified at the condition of the evacuees. For example, over 12 per cent of those evacuated from Newcastle-upon-Tyne did not have proper shoes and 50 per cent were infested with lice. Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister at the beginning of the war, said that he thought he knew all about the extent of poverty in Britain because he had been Minister of Housing for five years in the 1920s. He said evacuation showed that he did not know the true extent.

Housing

It was estimated in 1945, that about 1 million houses had been destroyed and damaged by the German bombing campaigns. Hence, both political parties said they would begin massive house building as soon as the election was over. The new modern homes would bring a new world and one that had been worth fighting for. J.B. Priestley, the left-wing radio broadcaster, said that ‘Britain was bombed into democracy’.

The Beveridge Report

The publication of the Beveridge Report in December 1942 (see Chapter 11) and the nationwide debate that followed convinced the British people, if not all politicians, that Britain would be a better place if its proposals were to be adopted. The Beveridge Report, with its attack on the ‘Five Giants’ (see Chapter 11), caught the mood of the nation and people wanted these giants to be attacked after the war.

US servicemen

The influence of the hundreds of thousands of servicemen from the USA must not be overlooked. The average height and weight of the US servicemen was greater than that of the average British soldier. The US soldiers were better paid. In addition, the US troops had access to many items that were denied to the average British soldier who had to endure rationing. What many British soldiers also noticed was the free and easy way officers and GIs got on in the US army – the opposite of the class-ridden structure of the British services. British soldiers were quick to ask why such differences existed.

Tasks

1. Personal research – find out about the work of Ernest Bevin and Herbert Morrison during the Second World War.
2. Explain why evacuation had such an impact on many people during the war.
3. What message is the cartoonist putting across in Source A?
4. Working in pairs, prepare a one-minute presentation to explain what J.B. Priestley meant when he said ‘Britain was bombed into democracy’.

Source B: From an interview with Clement Attlee in 1965

Interviewer: *Why do you think the nation turned against Churchill?*
 Attlee: *Well, they didn't turn against him; they turned against the Tories. They remembered what happened in the thirties.*
 Interviewer: *Was it also a matter of unemployment?*
 Attlee: *I think the general feeling was that people wanted a new start. We were looking towards the future. The Tories were looking towards the past.*

It is clear that the Conservative Party relied too much on Churchill. His popularity was never really questioned and it remained undiminished among the British people, but many voters were unwilling to trust the Conservative Party to run the country in peacetime. Unlike the Labour Party, the Conservatives did not produce many major figures (other than Churchill) during the war. Only R.A. Butler emerged and his lasting legacy was the 1944 Education Act (see page 00).

People were ready for a change. The war had meant that everyone had had to make sacrifices and Labour's manifesto, the Beveridge Report (see Chapter 11) and a general feeling of optimism all contributed the Conservatives' defeat.

Source C: From *Tides of Fortune* by Harold Macmillan, 1969. Macmillan was a leading Conservative during the 1945 election.

Vast crowds turned out in flocks to see and applaud Churchill. They wanted to thank him for what he had done for them. But this did not mean that they wanted to entrust him and his Tory colleagues with the conduct of their lives in the years that were to follow. They had been persuaded during the last years of the war, that immediately the struggle was over there would follow a kind of automatic Utopia. The British people would move with hardly an effort into a Socialist or semi-Socialist state under their own leaders, which would bring about unexampled prosperity in a world of universal peace. Nor had they forgotten or been allowed to forget the years before the war..

Source D: A BBC news broadcast, 26 July 1945

Throughout the election campaign Mr Churchill had appealed to the country to give his new National Government a good majority. But the appeal was rejected by the people of Britain, largely, it is thought, because they believed Labour's promises to implement the Beveridge Report and its plans for creating a welfare state. At a news conference this evening, Mr Attlee promised a new world order and an economic policy to raise the standards of life for people all over the world. He said: 'We are facing a new era and I believe that the voting at this election has shown that the people of Britain are facing that new era with the same courage as they faced the long years of war.'

However, it must be remembered that the British electoral system of first-past-the post favoured Labour. The majority of the electorate did not vote Labour – they secured only eight per cent more of the vote than the Conservatives, yet won almost twice as many seats.

Tasks

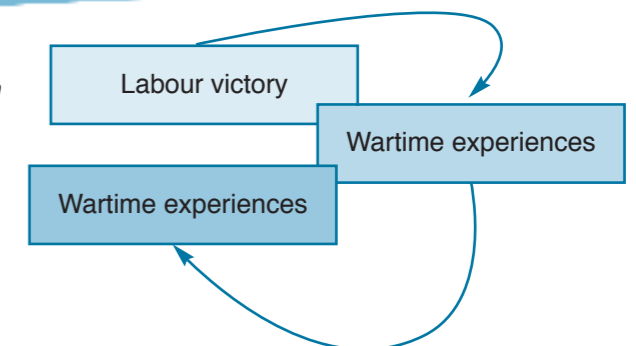
1. Study Source B. What can you learn from Source B about Clement Attlee? (Remember how to answer this type of question? For guidance, see page 00.)
2. Study Source C. What can you learn from Source C about the reasons for the defeat of the Conservative Party? (Remember how to answer this type of question? For guidance, see page 00.)
3. Study Sources B, C and D and use your own knowledge. How far do these sources agree about the defeat of the Conservative Party in 1945? Explain your answer, using the sources. (Remember how to answer this type of question? For guidance, see page 00.)

Source E: Cartoon published in the *London Evening Standard*, 27 July 1945, the day after the results of the general election



Tasks

4. What message is the cartoonist putting over in Source E?
5. Re-read pages 00–00. Create a mind map of the reasons for the victory of the Labour Party in 1945. Place Labour Victory in the centre, like in the example on the right, and have the reasons radiating from the centre.



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Examination practice

This section provides guidance on how to answer the hypothesis testing question from Unit 3, which is worth sixteen marks.

How to answer

In this question you are asked to explain an interpretation using:

- five or six sources
- your own knowledge (although this is only worth four of the marks).

At each level, you should make judgements on the reliability and sufficiency of the sources.

Sufficiency means how much do the sources explain or show about the event or person.

The examiner would expect you to write between one and two sides of A4. Here is a mark scheme for the synthesis question:

Level	Descriptor	Marks
2	A supported answer that supports or disagrees with the interpretation and comments on the reliability of the sources.	5–8
3	A developed answer that supports and disagrees with the interpretation using the sources and your own knowledge, although the answer may lack balance. Comments on the reliability and sufficiency of the sources.	9–12
4	A fully balanced answer that uses precisely selected material from the sources and own knowledge. The reliability and sufficiency of the sources are taken into account in coming to a conclusion.	13–16

Question 1 – hypothesis testing

'Winston Churchill was the main reason for the defeat of the Conservative Party in the 1945 general election.' How far do Sources A–F support this statement? Use details from the sources and your own knowledge to explain your answer.

Source A: From Winston Churchill's election broadcast 4 June 1945

No socialist government conducting the entire life and industry of the country could afford to allow free, sharp or violently worded expressions of public discontent. They would have to fall back on some form of Gestapo, no doubt very humanely directed in the first instance ... Here in old England, we don't like to be regimented and ordered about and have every action of our lives prescribed for us. In fact, we punish criminals by sending them to Wormwood Scrubs and Dartmoor Jail where they get full employment.

Source B: From an election broadcast by Clement Attlee, leader of the Labour Party, June 1945

The Conservative Party remains as always a class party. In 23 years in the House of Commons, I cannot recall more than half a dozen from the ranks of the wage earners. It represents today, as in the past, the forces of property and privilege. The Labour Party is, in fact, the one party which most nearly reflects in its representation and composition all the main streams which flow into the great river of our national life. Our appeal to you, therefore, is not narrow or sectional.

Source C: From the autobiography of Herbert Morrison, written in 1960. Morrison was Home Secretary during the war and helped to write the Labour Party Manifesto in 1945.

The very honesty and simplicity of the campaign helped enormously. We had not been afraid to be frank about our plans. There would be public ownership of fuel and power, transport, the Bank of England, civil aviation, and iron and steel. We proposed a housing programme dealt with in relation to good town planning. We promised to put the 1944 Education Act into practical operation. We said that wealth would no longer be the passport to the best health treatment. We promised that a Labour government would extend social insurance over the widest field.

Source D: Cartoon published in the *London Evening Standard*, 30 June 1945. Churchill is addressing a crowd and he is flanked by people who are paid by the state



Source E: Cartoon from the *Daily Mirror*, June 1945



Author query: Source E image too small at this size to read the caption - will need to add to the heading if this image is used at this size

Source F: From a Labour Party election broadcast, June 1945

We are proud of the fact that our country in the hours of its greatest danger stood firm and united, setting an example to the world of how a great democratic people rose to the height of the occasion and saved democracy and liberty. We are proud of the self-sacrifice and devotion displayed by men and women in every walk of life in this great adventure. We call you to another great adventure which will demand the same high qualities as those shown in the war: the adventure of civilisation.

Planning your answer

Make a copy of the grid below and complete it to help you plan your answer. Advice on how to write your answer is given on page 00.

First study Sources A–F.

Which sources agree with the interpretation? Why? Give a brief explanation in the grid. An example has been done for you.

Which sources disagree with the interpretation? Why? Give a brief explanation in the grid. An example has been done for you.

Now briefly make a judgment on the reliability of each source. For further guidance refer to page 00.

In what ways is each source reliable? An example has been done for you.

In what ways is each source unreliable? An example has been done for you.

Now use your own contextual knowledge of the general election.

What knowledge can you use to agree with the interpretation? Summarise this in your grid.

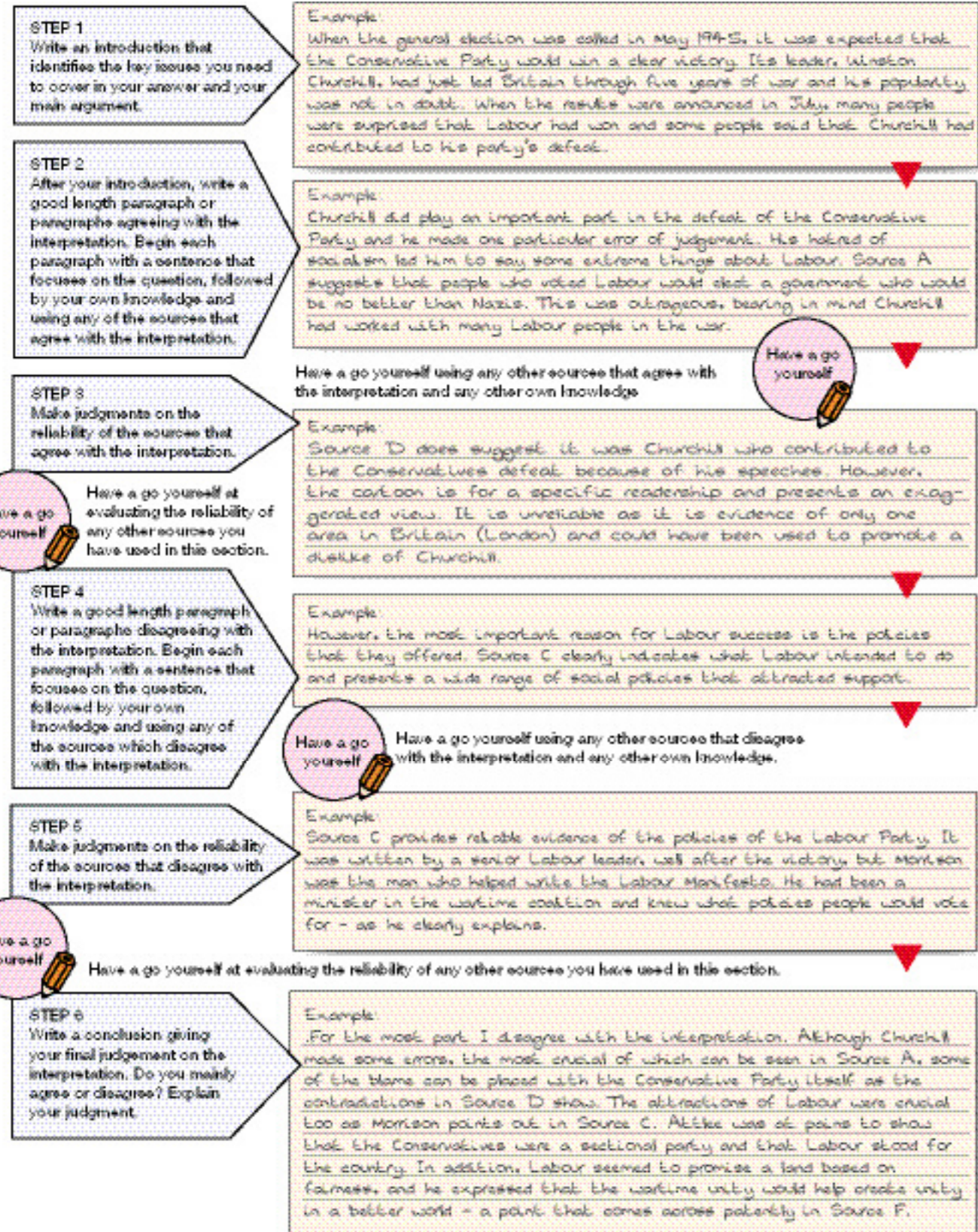
What knowledge can you use to disagree with the interpretation? Summarise this in the grid. An example has been done for you.

Level	Agrees with interpretation	Disagrees with interpretation	Reliable	Unreliable
Source A	Churchill implies that people who vote Labour are no better than Nazis, implying those who want improvements are enemies of Britain.			
Source B		Suggests it was the class nature of the Conservative Party as a reason for failure.		
Source C				

OVERMATTER ON PAGE 112

The diagram below gives you the steps you should take to write a good hypothesis testing answer. Use the steps and examples, along with your completed

planning grid from page 97, to complete the answer to the question on page 96.



11

Responding to the Beveridge Report: the attack on 'want'

Source A: Cartoon published in a British newspaper two days after the publication of the Beveridge Report, 3 December 1942



Task

What can you learn from Source A about the Beveridge Report?

The British government was keen to call the Second World War a 'people's war' in order to give a sense of involvement. In June 1941, a committee was set up to look into the existing provision for health insurance. There was nothing revolutionary in this and nothing out of the ordinary was expected. However, as the work of the committee progressed it began to broaden its scope and its chairman, William Beveridge, looked at all aspects of problems which faced ordinary people in their lives. He called these problems the 'Five Giants'. The findings of his report eventually formed the framework of the 'welfare state' set up by the newly elected Labour government after 1945.

- This chapter answers the following questions:
- Why was the Beveridge Report drawn up?
 - What were the recommendations of the Beveridge Report?

Examination skills
In this chapter you will be given the opportunity to practise some of the question types from Unit 3.