

Black Death

Evidence Nov 09

A1

SOURCE A: a picture from a medieval church altarpiece, showing the plague, sent by God to punish sinful people, whilst the Virgin Mary and saints try to help mankind

- A1. Look at **Source A**.
How are the saints and the Virgin Mary trying to help mankind? (2)



Which is the best answer and why?

- Those people looking up to heaven with their hands together
- The artist shows the Saints and the Virgin Mary kneeling and praying to God in Heaven to ask for forgiveness of the world's sins

A2

SOURCE B: an extract from the modern history book *Death and Disease* by Alex Wolf

In 1348, a group of physicians at the University of Paris made an in-depth study of the plague.

They concluded that it had been caused by an unfortunate conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter and Mars which had occurred at 1 o'clock in the afternoon on 20th March 1345, and had caused the earth to exhale poisonous vapours [air]. The physicians recommended avoiding fatty meat, fish and sleeping during the daytime.

- A2. Look at Source B. How did the physicians at the University of Paris believe the Black Death had come about? (3)

Model Answer for A2

The earth gave off poisonous vapours

According to the physicians the Black Death was caused by an unusual alignment of the Planets , Mars, Saturn and Jupiter which caused the earth to give off poisonous gases.

A3

SOURCE C: an extract from Guy de Chauliac's book *Surgery*, written soon after the Black Death;



Guy de Chauliac was a French doctor who survived catching the plague. There were two causes. The general cause was the close position of the three great planets . . .

Such a coming together of planets is always a sign of wonderful, terrible or violent things to come.

The particular cause of the disease in each person was the state of the body – bad digestion, weakness and blockage – and for this reason people died.

- A3. Look at Source C. With which source, A or B, does it most agree about how the Black Death started? Explain your answer. (7)

Model answer for A3 C A N Y

In Source C the writer believes that the plague was firstly caused by the alignment of the planets, Jupiter, Saturn and Mars and secondly people caught it if their health was poor particularly the digestion.

Source B agrees with Source C as it the Physicians also believed that the alignment of the planets was to blame. They also recommended a change in diet which again links to Guy de Chauliac's suggestion that bad digestion was a cause.

Source A disagrees less as it suggests that God is punishing the world. Stars are shown but there is no pattern or alignment.

The reason why Source C and B agree more is that Guy de Chauliac was at the meeting in Paris and as the Pope's Physician he was an influential voice who many would listen to and believe despite the fact that he was misguided in his views.

Question A4

A4. Look at and refer to all the sources. Which source do you think is the most useful evidence for what educated people then believed caused the Black Death? (8)

Model Answer A4 (I,I)

A useful source is one that gives an historian insight and information. There is no such thing as a totally useless source.

Source A is valuable and unique contemporary drawing showing precise detail and gives us a clear insight into what some medieval people believed was the cause and how people could pray to God to hopefully stop the plague.

Source B is an extract from a modern history book. The author would have had access to a variety of different sources and provides a fair, balanced and accurate account.

Source C is a very useful contemporary explanation, giving precise information. Guy de Chauliac is misguided, but it still gives a fascinating insight into the beliefs of this important and probably influential man.

Source B is the most useful as the author probably used sources A and C in his research. Sources A and C, however, are uniquely valuable and of the two C is probably more useful.