

## **A LEVEL**

*Examiners' report*

# **HISTORY A**

**H505**

For first teaching in 2015

## **Y224/01 Summer 2018 series**

Version 1

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## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

## Paper Y224/01 series overview

Y224 is one of twenty four units for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about one hundred years through a short answer essay and a traditional essay. The paper contains two questions, each having two parts, a short answer essay and a traditional essay and candidates have to answer both parts of one question.

To do well on the short essay question (a), candidates need to consider the significance or importance both issues, factors, individuals or events mentioned in relation to the question. Having analysed or explained both they must reach a supported judgement as to which is the most important or significant.

To do well on the traditional essay question (b) candidates need to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. In order to reach the higher levels candidates will need to assess the issues they discuss and reach a supported judgement, at least in the conclusion.

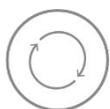
### *Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:*

- gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short answer essay
- reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important
- linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question
- when answering the essay question candidates discussed at least two issues in depth
- made the supporting detail both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic
- reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question
- made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question.

### *Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:*

- considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way
- produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response
- were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question
- showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay
- were unable to support their answer with relevant or accurate material
- did not focus on the precise wording of the question
- made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

Overall, it was pleasing to see that there was a greater tendency this year, as compared to previous series, for candidates to focus on the issue in the question and avoid bringing in less relevant material. However, there were still a number of answers where candidates unfortunately were not able to access the higher levels of the marks scheme because they diverted away from the issue in the question onto material that was less relevant, perhaps because they were preferred topics, and this should be avoided.



**AFL** When undertaking practice essay plans and answers in preparation for examinations, candidates could undertake a traffic light assessment of the relevance of material they have included for the specific question set: Green = highly relevant, and definitely needs to be included; Amber = partially relevant, could be included but needs to be carefully linked; Red = not relevant and should not be included.



**Misconception** There did seem to be some unevenness in confidence with different areas of the specification, as outlined below, and it would be helpful if candidates could be encouraged to give all topics and areas of the specification equal and balanced consideration during revision.

It was good to see, in general, a good understanding of the demands of the different sub-questions. It was very pleasing to see how confident candidates now are with the expectations for the 10 mark part (a) questions. For essay questions, there is evidence at both AS and A Level of candidates using fairly stock social/political/economic paragraph structures even where this does not relate strongly to the issue in the question; where candidates select factors based on their direct relevance to the question this is enabling them to argue and evaluate more effectively and thus access higher levels of the marks scheme.

### Question 1(a)(i,ii)

1 (a) Who made the greater contribution to resistance to Apartheid in the years 1978–1989?

- (i) The African National Congress (ANC)
- (ii) The United Democratic Front (UDF)

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]



**Misconception** This appeared to be an area of the specification that candidates felt less confident on, with far fewer selecting question 1 a/b. Even where this question was selected, there was in many cases a lack of precise and specific knowledge of developments in this period as compared to what is typical of other areas of the specification.

In particular, many candidates would have benefitted from a more precise understanding of the activities of both the ANC and UDF during this specific period for 1a as well as greater chronological focus and the elimination of examples which fell outside the period in question.

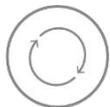
### Question 1(b)\*

(b)\* 'The leadership of Nelson Mandela was the main reason why South Africa was able to move towards free, democratic elections in the years 1989–1994.' How far do you agree? [20]

In general, candidates would have benefitted from the ability to demonstrate a deeper and more precise understanding of the political developments 1989-1994 for 1b, to enable a more precise focus on the question. There was unfortunately a tendency for some candidates to defer to somewhat 'stock' or generic causes of the end of Apartheid essay plans which did not always directly address the specifics of the question, and also to bring in material relating to the post-1994 period which could not be credited. That said there were some answers that were clearly informed by specific and accurate knowledge where different factors were evaluated and analysed effectively, and where a sustained focus was achieved on the reasons which enabled free, democratic *elections* to take place (i.e. political developments, rather than developments which enabled greater freedom more generally).

**OCR Support**

Exemplar answers which scored highly for Questions 1a and 1b are available on the OCR website, with commentaries explaining the features which enabled them to access the highest levels of the marks scheme.

**AFL**

Candidates could be encouraged to read and evaluate one of the lower marked exemplar answers included on the OCR website, and could identify the features which prevented it from accessing higher levels of the marks scheme. They could then improve the answer using their own knowledge and skills, and compare it to one of the answers provided which achieved a higher mark, analysing the features which made these answers more likely to achieve higher marks.

## Question 2(a)(i,ii)

OR

- 2 (a) Which of the following actions of the African National Congress (ANC) had a greater impact on resistance to Apartheid in the years 1948–1955?
- (i) The Defiance Campaign of 1952
  - (ii) The Freedom Charter of 1955

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

It was clear that this was an area of the specification that candidates felt fairly confident on in most cases. The majority of answers were able to offer a supported evaluation of the importance of both factors for question 2a, although in some cases candidates exhibited a lack of chronological understanding which impeded their answers.

## Question 2(b)\*

- (b)\* 'International opposition to Apartheid had little effect in the years 1948–1989.' How far do you agree? [20]

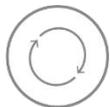
Question 2b required candidates to synthesise knowledge from across more than one of the key topics and it was very pleasing to see how confidently many candidates achieved this, a sign that centres are preparing candidates effectively for a range of types of essay questions. The answers which were able to attain marks at the highest levels of the marks scheme went beyond describing and explaining different types of international opposition and how they developed, and directly evaluated their effect, applying knowledge that could evidence this.

**Misconception**

Some candidates misunderstood the demands of the question, and tried to evaluate international opposition relative to other types of internal opposition. It would be helpful for candidates to note that in a question of this formulation what should be evaluated is the statement itself, in this case, the view that international opposition had little effect. It was not necessary, or desirable, to bring in discussion of other types of opposition, nor was extensive discussion of the *causes* of international opposition directly addressing the question.



**OCR Support** Exemplar answers which scored highly for Questions 2a and 2b are available on the OCR website, with commentaries explaining the features which enabled them to access the highest levels of the marks scheme.



**AFL** Candidates could be encouraged to make a table which lists types of international opposition in the far left column, their effect in the middle left hand column, specific evidence which demonstrates this effect in the middle right hand column, and a 'score' /5 for extent of effect in the right hand column, thus encouraging them to differentiate between description of the opposition; explanation of its effect and evaluation of the extent of the impact, connecting each with specific evidence. A similar activity could also be used with other sub-topics such as internal opposition etc.

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