

## **A LEVEL**

*Examiners' report*

# **HISTORY A**

**H505**

For first teaching in 2015

## **Y319/01 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 Y319/01 series overview

Y319 is one of twenty one units for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of at least one hundred years through an Interpretation option on a named in-depth topic and two essays. The paper is divided into two sections. In Section A candidates are required to use contextual knowledge to test the views of two historians about one of the three named in-depth topics or an aspect of one. The question does not require them to comment on the style of writing or the provenance of the interpretation. In Section B candidates are required to answer two essay questions from a choice of three.

To do well on Section A, candidates need to explain the view of each interpretation in relation to the question and then evaluate the interpretation by the application of contextual knowledge. Responses should show an understanding of the wider debate connected to the issue.

To do well on Section B, candidates need to make connections and links across the whole period, explaining similarities and differences between the events they are discussing in order to show an awareness of continuity and change across the whole period unless instructed otherwise. The comparisons made may be either between periods within the topic or between regions. The strongest answers will test an hypothesis and reach a supported judgement.

### *Overview of candidate performance*

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

- showed a clear understanding of the views of the two interpretations in relation to the question
- were able to use contextual knowledge to test the interpretations, linking that knowledge directly to the interpretation through evaluative words
- were able to consider both the strengths and limitations of both Interpretations using contextual knowledge
- in answering the essay questions, covered the whole period in a balanced way
- adopted a thematic approach
- made links and comparisons between aspects of the topic
- explained the links and comparisons
- supported their arguments with precise and relevant examples
- reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question.

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

- showed a limited understanding of one or both of the interpretations
- did not go beyond a basic explanation of part of the interpretation
- did not link any contextual knowledge directly to the interpretation and therefore did not evaluate the interpretation
- in answering the essay, adopted a chronological rather than thematic approach
- did not make links or comparisons even if events from different parts of the period were discussed in the same paragraph
- failed to cover the whole period
- did not focus on the precise wording of the question
- made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

## Section A overview

Section A requires candidates to evaluate the views of two historians about an issue related to one of the three named in-depth topics. The strongest responses will explain the views of the two passages about the issue in the question and then use contextual knowledge and an understanding of the wider historical debate about the issue to evaluate the interpretations. Credit will not be given for comments about the provenance of the passages and comments about what is not covered by the interpretations should be limited. The focus of the response should be on what is in the actual passages and not what is missing. Responses that simply explain the interpretations and their view about the issue in the question will not go beyond Level 3.

### Question 1

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the impact of the Dawes Act on Native Americans. [30]

The vast majority of answers recognised the need to engage with the interpretations and evaluate them using their own knowledge and did this with varying degrees of success. Stronger answers were able to draw on good knowledge of the Dawes Act such as the response of the tribes, including the success of the Navajos in farming their new land and the limitations in the acquisition of citizenship, as many neither wanted it nor were able to exercise their new rights in the face of prejudice. Many answers also effectively used knowledge from the early twentieth century such as Lone Wolf v Hitchcock and the Meriam Report to help their evaluation. The very best answers also gave a more substantial judgement where they explained not only why one interpretation was more convincing but also the limitations of the other in comparison. Weaker candidates explained the content of each passage with little attempt to evaluate them and some were deflected into lengthy descriptions of events such as the Plains Wars without linking them to the passages. There was quite a bit of information about the Dawes Act especially in passage B and some candidates did little more than use B to evaluate A with mixed success. A few were tempted to discuss the provenance of the passages and even discussed in some detail the fate of other indigenous groups such as the Aborigines in Australia. As with last year the biggest discriminator was between the candidates who attempted to evaluate the arguments in each passage using their knowledge of the topic and those that either described the content of each passage in the weaker examples or explained them but with little attempt to work out which was the more convincing and why. Exemplar 1 is typical of a Level 6 response.

### Exemplar 1

1.		AS reservation policy proved expensive and sparked confrontation between Native Americans and white settlers, the US government sought a more sustainable programme. The Dawes Act was intended to hasten the assimilation of Native Americans, providing them with land and the opportunity to create their own farming communities. Despite potentially well meaning intentions, The Dawes Act had mixed effects upon
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Native American groups. Within passage A, P. Johnson suggests that ~~the Dames Act~~ the Dames Act had a positive impact on Native Americans as it enabled them to avoid exploitation and wardship. Alternatively, in Passage B, Fellows and Wells suggest that the US Government was misguided and that the Dames Act ignored Native American culture. While sparking ~~opinion~~ ~~opinion~~ opinion, it seems most likely that the Dames Act ~~is~~ is difficult to characterise as simply positive or

negative for Native Americans.

Firstly, within passage A, Johnson suggests that "many Indians ... took advantage of it ... became full members of the American farming community." This statement is mostly valid as there are certain examples in which Native American tribes were able to successfully form farming communities. The prime example, and 'poster child' of the Dames Act supporters during this period, were the Navajo tribe. They were able to quickly adapt to homestead life and made use of government grants, even increasing a herd of 200 goats and sheep to over 1000 in only a few years. However, it must be considered that the Navajo only represent a small number of Native American tribes. Unlike many, the Navajo were beginning to develop a more stationary lifestyle and were living in ~~semi perm~~ permanent homes even before the introduction of reservations. They were also experienced in livestock, having begun to keep small herds of goats ~~as~~ well before government grants. While the Navajo population increased unprecedentedly throughout the period, this was not reflective of the wider Native American population. The Plains Indians,

is can also be considered as somewhat ostracised as the government's a role model for other Native American tribes. The Navajo were rd, in great contrast to the and land most commonly allotted to Native

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<p>* The Navajo's success can also be considered as somewhat orchestrated as the government's attempt to create a role model for other Native American tribes. The Navajo were even given fertile land, in great contrast to the arid land most commonly allotted to Native American homesteaders.</p>	<p>AN</p>	<p>negative for Native Americans.</p>
	<p>F</p>	<p>Firstly, within passage A, Johnson suggests that "many Indians... took advantage of it... became full members of the American farming community." This statement is mostly valid as there are certain examples in which Native American tribes were able to successfully form farming communities. The prime example, and 'poster child' of the Dawes Act supporters during this period, were the Navajo tribe. They were able to quickly adapt to homestead life and made use of government grants, even increasing a herd of 200 goats and sheep to over 1000 in only a few years. However, it must be considered that the Navajo only represent a small number of Native American tribes. Unlike many, the Navajo were beginning to develop a more stationary lifestyle and were living in <del>semi-perm</del> permanent homes even before the introduction of reservations. They were also experienced in livestock, having begun to keep small herds of goats <del>for</del> well before government grants. While the Navajo population increased unprecedentedly throughout the period, this was not reflective of the wider Native American population. The Plains Indians, who traditionally lived nomadically, were badly affected with populations decreasing by around 3 thousand throughout the Gilded age. Overall, Johnson's statement is mostly valid as many Native Americans did adapt to homestead life. However, it fails to be fully convincing as it ignores the negative experiences of many Native Americans who were unable to adapt.</p>

		<p><del>Johnson</del> Secondly, Johnson goes on to suggest that "assimilation was always the best option". This statement, while entirely subjective to one's definition of success, seems wildly invalid as it ignores the damage made to Native American culture. <del>While some Native Americans were beginning to assimilate, primarily through marriage, they were often <del>not</del> left in a cultural no-man's land, unable to integrate into white society and unable to return to tribal life.</del> While reservations incidentally maintained tribal traditions and culture, the Dawes Act aimed to split tribes into family units, cohesive with European tradition. The impact of a loss of culture can be clearly seen in the numbers of alcoholic and bankrupt Native American people throughout this period. Furthermore, the attempted destruction of Native American culture, as seen in the Dance order's banning of the traditional Ghost Dance, resulted in the notorious 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee. During which 200 women and children were killed. Johnson may be intending to suggest that assimilation limits overall conflict, they fail to consider the highly volatile and negative results of forced assimilation as was presented in the 1887 Dawes Act.</p>
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		<p>Overall, passage A is only somewhat convincing as it highlights isolated success stories without fully considering the effect of the Dawes Act on the majority of Native Americans.</p>

	F	<p>Lastly, within passage B, Fellows and Wells put forward the idea that "the government did not understand the wishes of the Native Americans" and that the Dawes Act "did nothing to help their Civil Rights". This is mostly valid, as it seems the majority of</p>

	EVAL	Native Americans did not desire American citizenship and so were not motivated by the promises of the Dawes Act. While the Act did technically aid civil rights in a traditional sense, by providing Native Americans
	KU	landowners with the opportunity to vote, many had <del>no</del> no interest in participation and preferred the system of tribal councils. There is no doubt that the US Government were out of touch with the wishes of Native Americans. However, the suggestion that the Act did not aid civil rights could be somewhat disputed. While they may not have wanted or appreciated the vote, the government's decision to reform <sup>the</sup> reservation system does indicate some attempt to
	EVAL	improve upon the corrupt actions of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and to provide Native Americans with more self-sufficiency. Overall, passage B is mostly valid as it considers varying governmental motives and the varied effects of the <del>Dawes</del> Dawes Act.
	JU	In conclusion, passage B is a more convincing argument as <del>to</del> to the impact of the 1887 <del>Dawes</del> Dawes Act as it presents a realistic assessment of the experience of the majority of Native Americans. Passage A is less convincing, as it focuses too heavily on the isolated
	JU	success of some tribes and seems to consider success as simply a lack of 'friction' in assimilation.

## Section B overview

Candidates are required to answer two out of three questions. In answering these questions candidates should cover the whole period during the course of their answer unless the question states otherwise. Although there is no requirement to cover the whole period in each paragraph there should be a sense of balance between different parts of the period during the course of the answer. The nature of the questions on this paper is different to the essay questions set on Units 1 and 2 and in order to reach the higher levels require evidence of synthesis. Synthesis is when links and comparisons are made between different parts of the period or between different rulers or regions, however it is also important that these links and similarities or differences are explained and events are not simply asserted as being similar or different. Good explanation will take responses to the top of Level 4 but to go higher there should be evidence of comparison.

### Question 2\*

- 2\* 'Discrimination against African Americans remained strong throughout the period 1865–1992.'  
How far do you agree? [25]

This was a popular question which produced a range of responses. The best answers approached the question thematically. Many candidates did this with a political, social and economic approach and this worked well, but some essentially developed a chronological list within each theme rather than drawing out and explaining points of similarity or contrast across the period. Other successful candidates considered the nature of discrimination and looked at themes such as opposition groups, Presidents, Supreme Court and state governments across the period. Weaker essays fell into a chronological approach and essentially told the story of discrimination rather than focusing on the extent of change. There were also those determined to write about African American leaders and movements and external factors such as war and media and often did not make them directly relevant to the question. A significant number also did not give a balanced coverage of the period with a few neglecting the nineteenth century completely and many thought that discrimination ended (as did their essays) in 1965.

### Question 3\*

- 3\* 'The 1930s were the most important turning point in the development of Trade Union and labour rights.' How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1865 to 1992? [25]

Many of the strongest answers defined the criteria by which a turning point could be measured, citing for example the creation of permanent and widespread change. Such answers tended to approach the question thematically, looking at the impact of the 1930s and alternative turning points in terms of, for example, the right to strike, union power, working conditions, and the attitude of the federal government. This allowed for a more developed synthesis and the identification of similarities and differences across time periods, for example contrasting the 1930s to the labour legislation of the 1960s or the strikes in the Gilded Age. Many did conclude that the 1930s saw the greatest change but others argued effectively that many of the gains had been reversed by 1992. However, those that planned their answer turning point by turning point, often going in chronological order were usually unable to find any significant comparison until the conclusion. A significant number did not adequately cover the period and a few neglected the pre 1930 changes altogether. This was less common with the end of the period as so many are familiar with the 1981 PATCO strike and Reagan's response.

## Question 4\*

- 4\* 'Throughout the period 1865–1992, Native Americans took little action themselves to improve their civil rights.' How far do you agree? [25]

This was a popular question although many were tempted to go into some detail about the Dawes Act which they had already written about and was less relevant for this question. The best answers had an impressive range of knowledge about Native American action, from the Plains Wars and the Battle of Little Bighorn (known to the NAs as Greasy Grass), action taken through the Supreme Court in rulings such as Lone Wolf v Hitchcock and by NARF in the 1970s, the emergence of NCAI in 1944 and through to AIM and the Red Power movement of the 1960s and 70s. Such answers either set this against the failures of Native American action, or alternatively against the actions of the federal government in the improvement of their civil rights. Many good answers acknowledged that there was a conflict between what Native Americans and the federal government wanted in terms of civil rights. The best answers approached the question thematically, addressing for example the right of self determination, land rights and cultural rights. Weaker answers tended to show very little awareness of Native American action beyond the Red Power movement in the 1960s and 70s, and some resorted to chronological descriptions of federal government action with little reference to the Native Americans.

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