

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H105


For first teaching in 2015

Y138/01 Summer 2019 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 Y138 series overview

Y138 is one of a number of British period study and enquiry units. Each unit has two elements: a period study and an enquiry. The Enquiry element either precedes or continues the period study so as to provide increased coherence and coverage of the chosen period of British History. The Period study element of the Unit group is assessed by essays, with two set from different Key topics and candidates are required to answer one. In the Enquiry element candidates are required to critically use three sources. The first question requires candidates to consider the utility of one source in relation to an issue and the second question requires candidates to use all three sources in their historical context to assess the validity of a view. In both questions, candidates are required to explain the source or sources in relation to the question and apply both contextual knowledge and consider the provenance of the sources in order to reach a judgement based on the sources on the issue in the question.

Section A overview

The Enquiry section in this unit comes at the end of the period and builds on the developments that have taken place in the reigns of James I and Charles I. The two questions require candidates to critically assess evidence and reach judgements. The critical evaluation of sources is the central theme in this section with all marks awarded against AO2.

Question 1

- 1 Use your knowledge of the political situation in 1659 to assess how useful Source A is as evidence of the seriousness of disorder in England in 1659. [10]

The source topic was drawn from the Key topic 'The restoration of Charles II'. The strongest answers were able to use their contextual knowledge to explain that this source came after the death of Oliver Cromwell and the resignation of Richard Cromwell and went on to suggest that there were fears that England was on the verge of a Third Civil War, suggesting that the description of events portrayed in the source was a reflection of the disorder and fear of chaos that was present in the country. The strongest responses commented on the Committee of Safety and their power, the role of the army and the position of parliament and this allowed them to further illustrate the constitutional struggles that were gripping England. The comments on the provenance usually involved some consideration of the date and this was linked to the developments, although not always accurately even though some were aware of the Monck/Lambert clash. Others commented that it considered only events in London but did not go on to link this to typicality of developments elsewhere. There were simplistic comments about the value of a newsletter. However, most were able to explain the message of the source and make a general or stock comment about the provenance and therefore access Level 3. Exemplar 1 below shows a response where both contextual knowledge and provenance are considered, but in order to reach the top level there would need to be a judgement, based on the earlier evaluation, as to how useful the source is as evidence of disorder in England in 1659.

Exemplar 1

Source A is very useful to demonstrate the disorder in England in 1659 as it describes the unrest of the people due to the lack of reforms or legislation that the Committee of Safety passed from October 1659 to December 1659. The unstable situation is also presented in the source as 'troops' had to be 'broken back' this shows the resistance of people to accept the Committee of Safety as they ~~had~~ lacked legitimacy as they were put into power by

Lambert dismissing the Rump in 1659. Furthermore the source ~~is~~ indicates the disorder in England as Monk and Lambert fought in November 1659. The source appears to support my knowledge of the unrest in England during 1659 and is therefore ~~not~~ reliable. Furthermore the source is a newsletter which would be intended to inform those around the country to ~~the~~ ~~is~~ what is happening. However the source might be overexaggerating the unrest in order to get those who oppose the Committee of Safety and want a free Parliament or Monarchy to take up arms. Moreover the source ~~contains~~ ~~with~~ references to the 'petition' which is reliable as the ~~committee~~ have used many petitions for a free Parliament or Monarchy during this year.

Question 2

- 2 Using these three sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that the main concern of most by 1660 was to establish a free parliament. [20]

Most candidates showed a sound grasp of each source in relation to the question, though a few struggled with the concept of 'free parliament'. The use of provenance varied considerably with many answers not considering the provenance of all the sources and therefore limiting the mark they could reach within the level, as is shown in the example below. Exemplar 2 is useful in showing how light touch knowledge can be used in a paragraph to make a valid point, but it also shows how the absence of provenance can limit a response as this helped to keep this answer at Level 4. Candidates found Source A the most challenging, although there were a number who either knew about the apprentice's petition or speculated that it was about a free parliament and used this to explain the divisions within the country, particularly with the army who wanted to preserve their power and were more concerned about their pay. Sources Band C were both petitions and attracted a variety of different interpretations, with a number uncertain as to the line of argument in B. However, the discussion of provenance was much stronger with comments about a petition and how far the gentry of Devon were representative of the country. Source C provided most candidates with a secure argument and link back to the question, but there were a number who thought that this was written by Monck rather than to him and this impacted on their subsequent discussion. Candidates were able to use their own knowledge effectively discussing the problems of the Protectorate parliaments and the rule of the Major Generals, while the strongest answers built on their understanding and knowledge and events of 1659 to explain why many wanted a free parliament, while also indicating that some were concerned by this as it was likely to yield a royalist majority.

Exemplar 2

Source C agrees with the statement as it is a petition to Monck to hold a free Parliament and not the Rump. This ~~is~~ demonstrates the views that allowed for Monck to reconsider his position and call back members purged in Prides Purge ^{on the} ~~the~~ 16th December 1648. Therefore this would be the perfect example of those in the country that desperately wanted a free Parliament in 1660. From my own knowledge

of the petitions during his period the source is reliable to the events of early 1660. ^{However} ~~Although~~

the source is limited as it gives an insight into the demands of the people but not the disorder ~~that~~ that was occurring during this point.

In conclusion source A and C support the view that the primary concern of 1660 was to implement a free Parliament

~~They~~ Both of these sources give a good insight to the events and ideas of the

time to support the opinion in the question.

However B seems to demonstrate the frustration

of the ^{local independent} gentlemen at the time more than the demand for a free Parliament.

Section B overview

Two essays are set, each from a different Key Topic, but centres should be aware that although there are two topics on James I and two on Charles there is no guarantee that one question will be set on each monarch, as is shown by the two questions below. The questions set require candidates to analyse causes and consequences of major historical issues.

Question 3

3* How successful was Personal Rule, 1629–40?

[20]

Most candidates displayed a good understanding of the events of Personal Rule and were able to discuss these and explain whether it was therefore successful or a failure. Most responses considered a good range of themes, with most discussing finance, foreign policy and religion. However, the strongest answers balanced their discussion, even of issues such as finance, where it appeared to be a success with Charles substantially reducing his debt. These responses noted that it created subsequent distrust, as was seen in the Long Parliament and also meant that he could not follow an active foreign policy, while others argued that initial success was replaced by failure following the Hampden Case and subsequent decline in income. The strongest responses went beyond explaining what was done by Charles during Personal rule and were able to link to developments to success and failure. Answers that considered the question of Scotland were often the most balanced as they argued that his attempt to enforce religious uniformity ended any semblance of success as it led to war and the subsequent abandonment of Personal Rule. There was also some discussion of issues such as Thorough and Wentworth's rule in Ireland. However, some answers argued that Charles' religious policy was a failure because it angered parliament, apparently oblivious of the fact it had been dissolved. The weakest answers were uncertain as to the events of Personal Rule and brought in developments in the early years of Charles' reign or assumed that Buckingham was assassinated during Personal Rule. The example below, Exemplar 3, provides an answer that just reached Level 5 as a result of the conclusion. The judgement in the conclusion is not fully developed and therefore it is at the bottom of the mark range and there were no interim judgements made about the issues discussed which kept the response at Level 5.

Exemplar 3

In conclusion Charles' policies throughout 1629 - 1640 were a great accomplishment as they created more efficient governing, more power in Ireland and enough money to continue without Parliament. However all policies created some form of resistance or alienation which led to the end of the civil war as well as future problems with Parliament in 1641.

Question 4

4* Assess the reasons why the Parliamentarians won the First Civil War.

[20]

There were a significant number of issues that candidates could discuss and examiners did not expect the full range to be considered. What was important, given the command 'Assess', is that responses weighed up the relative importance of the factors they chose to discuss in bringing about Parliament's victory in the First Civil War. Most candidates considered the issue of geography and were able to make valid points about the different regions the two sides controlled, with most going on to stress the importance of London for a variety of reasons. The strongest answers often linked that to the issue of finance and argued that Parliament had the advantage, while the king relied on gifts and donations, which would be important as the war became drawn out. This allowed a number to make the point that it was Charles' failure after Edgehill to go on and take London that brought about his defeat – he needed to retake his capital. This was often used when making a judgement and allowed some to argue it was this rather than either the alliance with the Scots or the creation of the New Model Army that was crucial, Charles had already sowed the seeds of his defeat in the first year of the war, the other developments simply hastened it in a long conflict. However, weaker answers attempted to discuss similar issues, but did not have the detailed support about issues such as finance or the role of the New Model Army and relied on sweeping generalisations that took their response into Level 3 at best. There was a significant number who produced a well explained list of reasons, often starting paragraphs with 'another reason' and unless, as is shown by Exemplar 4, there was an attempt to provide a supported judgement in the conclusion they confined themselves to Level 4.

Exemplar 4

TO conclude, Parliament simply had the necessary resources to fight a drawn-out war, unless the lack of food & equipment led the King to lose the First Civil War. If the war was simply shorter, the Royalists may have had a better shot, but the war ultimately deprived Charles of any advantage he may have had, even of superior Cavalry & experienced commanders such as his nephew, Rupert, who had fought in the ~~100~~ 100 years' war.

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