

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y101/01 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 Y101/01 series overview

Y101 is one of thirteen units for the revised AS Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about fifty years through an enquiries or source-based option and an essay. The paper is divided into two sections. In Section A candidates have to answer a compulsory source questions based on four written primary sources. The question requires them to use all four sources to assess the validity of a view. In Section B candidates are required to answer one essay question from a choice of two.

To do well on Section A, candidates need to be able to consider both provenance of the sources and apply contextual knowledge to them in order to reach a judgement about the sources in relation to the issue in the question.

To do well on Section 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.

<i>Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:</i>	<i>Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considered the provenance of the source(s) and used relevant contextual knowledge • linked the contextual knowledge clearly to the source being discussed to show whether the view of the source was valid or not • reached an overall judgement as to the extent to which the sources supported the view in the question • in answering the essay question, discussed at least two issues in depth • gave supporting detail that was 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not consider both the provenance and use contextual knowledge to evaluate the sources • wrote an unbalanced response in their treatment of the sources, with very little consideration of one of the sources • reached a judgement based on their knowledge rather than the sources • showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay • were unable to support their response with relevant material • did not focus on the precise wording of the question • made unsupported comments about issues which were assertions.

Section A

Question 1

Alfred the Great

- 1 Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that King Alfred found it difficult to defeat the Danes. [30]

Candidates were able to engage successfully with all four sources, with Asser (Source C) being the most accessible – as might be expected. In relation to Source A, many candidates were aware of its position in the chronology of events established by sources B and C, and the Battle of Edington in A, and knowledge of its provenance – the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle – was similarly well known. Candidates often remarked on Alfred's role in the Chronicle's conception, as well as the broader function of the work as 'propaganda' for the king. The provenance of Source B was less effectively handled. Many candidates were able to comment on the detail of the peace, as well as its historical context; but evaluating it as a source proved tricky, with some responses unable to say any more than it must have been composed at the time. Source C, as noted above, was generally handled with confidence: while many responses could recount Asser's motives for writing (e.g. the Welsh alliance and the need to exaggerate Alfred's low point with a view to embellishing his recovery), only some were able to point out that he was yet to join Alfred's court at the time of the events he is describing. Source D received a mixed reception, with some candidates pointing to the heralding of Alfred's reign as a golden age of the pre-Conquest era, while others noted – in a point well made – the dependency of Florence's work on the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Answers that achieved the higher levels made effective use of contextual knowledge and provenance in evaluating the content of each source; these responses also included judgements, notably at the end. In the lower levels, responses tended to explain source content with little attempt to evaluate or form judgements.

Exemplar 1

When assessing the sources it's clear that source ~~C~~ strongly supports the view that King Alfred found it difficult to defeat the Danes however source ~~A~~ ~~strongly~~ opposes this view but ~~source~~ it could be argued sources B and D ~~do~~ agree and also disagree with the view.

Source A ~~strongly~~ ^{or the} disagrees with the view that Alfred found it difficult to defeat the Danes. For example in source A it states that the "Danes gave him hostages... oaths that they would go out of his kingdom." ~~Source~~ ^{The} Anglo Saxon Chronicle is referring to Alfred's successful counter attack at Edington in 878 as Alfred scored huge success there by defeating the Danes. Therefore this source disagrees with the view Alfred found it difficult to defeat the Danes as he forced Guthrum and other Viking leaders to adopt a christian peace treaty as ~~Guthrum~~ Guthrum "would receive baptism" along with other Danish leaders. Alfred was successful at Edington as he was able to re-group and rethink his tactics while he took refuge at Athelney in Somerset. The chronicle is a reliable source of information as it was a collection of events that ~~happened~~ occurred during the time of Alfred's reign and was produced in order to document what happened at the time. However the Anglo-saxon chronicle was ~~used~~ arguably used as

form of propaganda for Alfred as it could showcase ^{the qualities} ~~low~~ ^{of a leader} Alfred ^{obtained} ~~was~~ ^{to the} ~~people~~ ^{Saxons} in Wessex in order to in order to prop up support for Alfred in Wessex. The source was produced to document the events that happened at the time Alfred was king of Wessex in order to build up a chronicle of events.

Source B on the surface doesn't support the view that King Alfred found it difficult to defeat the Danes. For example it discusses ~~the~~ the peace treaty formed between Alfred and Guthrum in 878 by discussing terms such as "land boundaries" which was concerned with how the kingdoms would be divided between the Anglo Saxons and Danes. Also it includes the rules and regulations by saying how "no more than any of them could come to us" which signals the end of fighting between Alfred and Guthrum. The treaty between Alfred and Guthrum was formed after Alfred launched a successful counter attack against the Great Heathen Army and so exchanged hostages but also the "oaths were sworn" that the ~~terms~~ agreed terms would not be broken. However peace didn't last long as conflict arose at Rochester & Benfleet in 885 and so the ~~treaty~~ treaty failed to serve its main purpose of bring peace. Therefore Alfred still had struggled ~~against the Danes~~ to defeat the Danes.

This exemplar highlights an understanding of the general purpose of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (in Source A) and partial evaluation of its provenance. It also points to an awareness of the connection between sources A and C: the events of A follow those referred to in C.

Section B

Question 2

The Making of England 899–1016

- 2* 'Edward the Elder's success depended on the help he was given by his sister, Aethelflaed.' Assess this view. **[20]**

A popular question; many responses recognised the importance of Aethelflaed in providing stability during Edward the Elder's reign, particularly by ruling Mercia while Edward consolidated his authority in Wessex. In addition, the significance of her contribution to the expansion of the burh network was noted, an activity that provided a platform on which Edward could enhance his military reputation. In addition, the joint campaigns conducted by Edward and Aethelflaed, notably the one that culminated in their victory at Tettenhall in 910, was used as further evidence of the king's dependency on her sister. Aethelflaed's dominance of Mercia, particularly during the illness of her husband, was commented on; the strength of her position was cited as a reason for Edward's ability to assume control of the kingdom after her death. Other factors that contributed to the king's success included: his own military prowess (independent of Aethelflaed), such as his ability to defeat his dynastic rival, Aethelwold (although the extent of his involvement in Aethelwold's defeat was discussed in some responses); his ability to form diplomatic alliances of his own, such as his relationship with the Welsh after Aethelflaed's death; and his exploitation of marriages as a way of securing his position. High-scoring responses provided a line of reasoning related to the question culminating with a focused judgement. Answers in the lower levels tended to focus more on description.

Exemplar 2

Edward the Elder's success could be due to help given by his sister however it was not the most important reason for his success as his burh system, tight tance diplomacy and military strength could be seen to happen without the help of his sister Aethelflaed.

To show that ~~Edward~~ Edward the Elder's success didn't depend on his sisters help you can look at the success of his burh system. Edward's first burh was constructed at Hertford in 911 to repel viking infringements from the eastern provinces and built another one at Hertford in 912 to protect trade routes from Essex to London. Moreover he built 2 on either side of the River Ouse in Buckinghamshire and one in Worcester in 917. This shows that Edward's success did depend on his sisters help due to the fact the burh system he implemented was so successful that not only did it prevent a viking threat in the area, it also gained the submission of the ~~the~~ vikings in that area to Edward, this could be seen in 914 where they where built on either sides of the river Ouse led to the viking commander in that area submitting to Edward. However one could argue that Aethelflaed also implemented burh, suggesting

that his success did depend on his sister's help. However the burh system was the most important reason for Edward's success because not only ~~to~~ did the burh prevent wiling ~~insurgency~~ but gained the submission of the local populus, and without the burh system Edward the Elder would not have been as powerful ^{as he exerted so much power} showing that the burh system was the most important reason for Edward's success.

To suggest that Edward the Elder's success depended on the help he was given by his sister Aethelflaed you can look at the military assistance Aethelflaed gave to Edward. Aethelflaed gave troops for Edward when he resided for 6 weeks in Scotland and Northumbria as well as providing ~~for~~ soldiers for the Battle of Tettenhall of 910. AD ~~sources~~ suggests that Edward depended on his sister for success. However in charters it was suggested that Edward had true authority in the region of Mercia, but if he did not give Aethelflaed some autonomy she would not help him again suggesting that ~~it is~~ Edward's success did rely on Aethelflaed. However the help given by Aethelflaed was not the most important reason for Edward's success because even though she did pro-

This exemplar highlights the emphasis often placed in responses on Aethelflaed's role in the expansion of the network of burhs during Edward's reign. It is also implied in the extract that the burhs provided a platform on which the king was able to build up his military reputation. Note that there is analysis here, which is typical of responses in the higher levels.

Question 3

3* Was Edgar a more effective reformer of the Church or of the government administration? [20]

This question was not as popular as Question 2. In general, responses included fairly detailed knowledge of both the reformation of the Church and government administration. The role of Aethelwold and Oswald, for example, in relation to the Church, was well known, particularly their contribution to the construction of new religious foundations. Coupled with this, candidates were aware of St Dunstan's *Regularis Concordia* and its role in bringing uniformity in observance across religious houses (although there was more uncertainty over its implementation), as well as broader issues, such as the corruption of the clergy. In administration, Edgar's control of the mints was often cited, as was the developing practice of issuing writs; some responses broadened out 'administration' by referring to the creation of the triple hundred of Oswaldslow. In forming an argument, responses often focused on the reform of the Church, since the influence of the pre-eminent religious figures of the reign extended beyond the limits of ecclesiastical matters. High-scoring responses provided a line of reasoning related to the question culminating with a focused judgement. Answers in the lower levels tended to focus more on description.

Exemplar 3

Edgar was a more effective reformer of ~~his~~ the Church rather than of his government administration.

Effectiveness can be judged by the success of Edgar's reforms in these areas as well as the evidence that supports this.

The reformation of monasticism during Edgar's reign is considered to be one of his greatest achievements & can be argued to be very effective. The removal of secular clergymen from ^{certain} ^{in the} positions ^{in the} church shows Edgar's motive that he wanted a more religiously focused church. This can be seen to have been successful as Edgar soon fills these positions with members of his court. Bishops such as Oswald Aethelwood & Dunstan are quickly promoted to placed in significant churches such as Glastonbury in order to place the church back on a more religiously focused mindset. This was further strengthened by ~~Edward~~ Edgar's introduction of the Regularis Concordia which gave priests & Bishops a way of staying true to the rules of St Benedict. Additionally, the Synodal council was set up in order to monitor & consistently improve the church upon a yearly basis. These reforms were concrete & built upon one another to create Edgar's vision of a strong & stable church. It can be argued that this vision was definitely achieved & its effects can be seen through the

Minister Charter. The gold covered book shows a time of real prosperity for the church & supports the argument that Edgar was a more effective reformer of the church. It can be argued this more effective reformation was due to Edgar's bias towards the church. This can be seen by many administrative reforms aiding both government & church.

Edgar was a ~~more~~ less effective reformer of the government administration due to the fact many of his reforms aided the church. For example, Shipsoke whilst strengthening the Navy & reducing external threats, also aided bishops who could buy land in order to increase their power. This shows that this reform does benefit Edgar's administration however it also benefits the church. Another example of this is Edgar's law codes which are almost entirely religiously motivated. Codes ~~such~~ talked about the paying of tithes to the church examples on how to live a holy life. This is yet another example of administrative reform benefitting the Church which shows that Edgar was a more effective reformer of the Church as these reforms benefitted the Church. This was not the case with every reform however, Edgar's reforms of coinage had multiple benefits to administration in England. The standardisation

This exemplar highlights the way links were often established between the Church and administrative reform in forming a line of reasoning. In this case, administrative reforms were seen as less successful than Church reform, since the former benefited the Church.

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