

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y103/01 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 Y103/01 series overview

Y103 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 answer 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

King John 1199–1216

- 1 Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that the actions of King Philip were the reason for John's loss of his French lands in 1204. [30]

Candidates were able to engage with all four sources, although some found it difficult to avoid repeating general observations relating to the provenance of A and D: that both were written by monks, who, as members of the Church, would automatically be hostile towards King John. In other responses, candidates were able to provide more nuanced assessments of the provenance of these sources by utilising more detailed knowledge of the king's problems with the Church. Knowledge of the provenance of B was uneven: some candidates were aware of the role of the Marshall's son in the work's creation, while others simply stated that the author could not have been present and so the source itself should be treated as unreliable. In most responses, there was good knowledge of the events leading up to King John's condemnation by the French court, as described in A, notably his marriage to Isabelle d'Angoulême. Treatment of Source C, by the king himself, was mixed, with some candidates finding it difficult to contextualise his message to the commander of Château Gaillard. Overall, many responses identified the themes highlighted in the sources: King Philip's military prowess and King's John own culpability in creating a situation that could be readily exploited by his enemies. 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

By 1204 John had lost all of what remained of his Angevin empire in France due to a number of factors, namely the actions of King Philip and John's lack of support from the English baronage. The view that Philip's actions were the ~~main~~ cause for the lost lands is the most convincing, supported by sources A, C and D. However source B supports the view that John's lack of allies and support from the English barons, along with his own actions, were the reason for the loss of his lands in France.

Source A presents the argument that it was Philip's quick movement through France following John's refusal to attend his court that ultimately led to John losing his empire in France by 1204. This was because John was declared a contumacious vassal of Philip, who was his overlord in France due to the treaty of Le Goulet in 1200, after refusing to attend a court he had been summoned to by Philip. However, the source was written by Ralph of Coggeshall in a chronicle, which were often filled with exaggerated circumstances due to it being a story, so the contents of the source may be hyperbolic, or presented in such a way that would make John look like a poor leader, hence the addition of 'met with no resistance'. This is backed up by the

likelihood this was written at the time of John's quarrel with the Church in 1207/1208, which would influence what was written as Ralph of Coggeshall was a member of the clergy. Despite this, the source, although possibly exaggerated, is backed up by the historical fact of John being proclaimed a contumacious vessel of Philip, and therefore allowing Philip to take his lands on a moral standpoint, and agrees with the view.

Source B disagrees with the view, presenting a situation where it can be viewed as the fault of John, and his barons, that the Angevin empire in France was lost. The source states that William the Marshal told John 'you have not enough friends' which we know to be true. John alienated his possible continental ally Otto of Brunswick by not giving him the inheritance, left by Richard, and treasures promised to him. Not only this, but the poor relations he had with the English baronage did not aid his attempts to regain or hold off Philip, particularly when it came to funding. John levied scutage a total of 11 times in his sixteen years as king, compared to Richard's 4 times in his entire reign. This angered the barons and diminished support he had, contradicting the view given. The source is a biography of William Marshal written

This exemplar highlights some of the more general observations about the provenance of A, as noted above. Here, the candidate evaluates its provenance by noting the king's troubles with the Church and the likely impact of these problems on Ralph's interpretation of events as a 'member of the clergy' (rather than as a monk).

Section B

Question 2

England 1216–1272

- 2* Assess the view that the support of the pope was the main reason why Henry III was able to regain power in 1261–1262. **[20]**

Responses to this question tended to focus on King Henry's ability to exploit divisions among the barons as the main reason for his resumption of power in 1261-62. Knowledge of his interactions with the papacy were generally well known, in particular the issue of the papal bull absolving the king of his obligation to adhere to the Provisions of Oxford. The impact of this event on baronial unity formed part of this discussion in many responses. Other factors discussed included the promotion of men who favoured the king and de Montfort's sojourn in France, which provided the king with an opportunity to build up his influence. Some responses that only partially addressed the question consisted more of general knowledge and observations, such as de Montfort's ambition; while these points held some validity, they were often not properly related to the question itself or its context. 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

and ~~it~~ under the provisions of
 Oxford or the provisions of the Barons. ~~in~~
~~the~~ Hence this can be seen as the
 main reason for Henry regain to power as
 the tensions between ~~to~~ ~~Barons~~ Richard de
 Clare and Simon de Montfort made England
 a hostile and resentment arose ~~at~~ alongside
 financial instability. ~~As a~~ Although in
 comparison to the support from the Pope
 which Henry ~~received~~ received miraculously
 began to benefit him and the agreement
 for the Treaty of Paris witnessed also by
 the Pope in 1261 ~~to~~ went ahead.

Furthermore, Simon de Montfort urge for
 power for himself could also be argued
~~to~~ into ~~play~~ playing a crucial reason
 for Henry VIII regain of power as
 he had obtained the Earldom of Lincoln
 and ~~was~~ continuously awarded much of
 Edward's land in Wales from Llanelli.
 For himself, his ~~son~~ Simon de Montfort
 cleverly distributed land to 5 of his
 sons and ~~especially~~ especially Peter de
 Montfort who took excessive advantage as his
 mother was Eleanor sister of Henry. This

~~steps~~ could also be argued to stem and ~~add to~~ comparatively add to tensions between barons as Richard de Clare was quite hostile to the contention giving out of land.

This exemplar highlights some of the general observations often made in responses to this question. In this extract, the candidate makes a broad reference to de Montfort's ambition and his enrichment of his family.

Question 3

3* 'Simon de Montfort lacked the necessary military and political skills to retain power.' How far do you agree? [20]

More popular than Question 2, in many responses, candidates were able to assess de Montfort's military and political skills with some confidence, balancing – for example – his success at the Battle of Lewes with his eventual demise at Evesham in 1265. In terms of his political skills, reference was often made to his largely unsuccessful spell as the king's lieutenant in Gascony as early sign of his lack of political and diplomatic nous. This point was often related to de Montfort's inability to maintain sustained baronial support, largely because of the way he dominated government and presented himself as king in all but name. Other explanations for his failure to retain power included the actions of King Henry and the support he received from the French king and the papacy, the role of Lord Edward in opposing de Montfort, particularly through his martial skills, as evidenced as the Battle of Evesham, and the illegitimacy of his position. Some responses referred to a more interesting point, that de Montfort's aims were simply too ambitious, even revolutionary, for his time, and that his rebellion against the king was doomed to failure even before it had properly begun. 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

questionable behaviour in Galston in 1252, cutting down the country's towns and creating unrest as a result. This meant that Henry viewed Simon as a person ~~rather~~ synonymous with unrest, and weakened his position as a political and military leader.

However, it is more likely that the reason he could not retain power wasn't due to a lack of skills, but was more a result of a ~~weak and divided~~ ~~support base~~ which rule associated with illegitimacy and disruption, leading to a struggle with the opposition. This can be seen in ~~the~~ ^{the} unrest under his reign following his success in the Battle of Lewes in 1264. The actions taken against foreigners and treatment of the ~~royal~~ ~~from~~ monarchy weakened his support as his ~~reign~~ power seemed limited in its legitimacy and consent as a result. The fact that King Henry and Edward were kept ~~to~~ as hostages, only being mere figureheads, frightened the barons as they saw his power as being autocratic and arbitrary, with no stability of monarchy to limit his power.

Furthermore, the ~~and~~ ~~and~~ illegitimate rule can be also seen in the

This exemplar highlights the significance of the illegitimacy of de Montfort's rule, broadened out into consideration of the autocratic nature of his style of governance, as a reason for his inability to retain power. It includes some analysis towards the end of the paragraph.

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