

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y105/01 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 Y105/01 series overview

There are thirteen British period study and enquiry units from which to choose. Each unit has two elements: a Period study and an Enquiry. The Enquiry element either precedes or continues the Period Study element so as to provide increased coherence and coverage of the chosen period of British history. The Enquiry element consists of one compulsory question based on four sources where candidate are required to explain and evaluate the sources using both contextual knowledge and provenance to reach a judgement about the sources in relation to the question. The Period study element is assessed through essays, with candidates choosing one 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 did not 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 answer with relevant material • did not focus on the precise wording of the question • made unsupported comments about issues which were assertions.

Section A overview

The focus in this section is on the critical use of evidence in investigating and assessing historical questions, problems and issues. The focus may be on depth of one key topic or breadth, using parts of several key topics for the evaluation of a theme. The critical evaluation of sources is central to this element, with all marks given against AO2. The sources selected are written and contemporary to the period. Candidates have to evaluate four sources, answering one question which sets the sources in their historical context.

Question 1

Wars of the Roses 1445–1461

- 1 Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, deserved his poor reputation. [30]

There were many good or very good answers to this question. Candidates were often able to discuss how each of the sources could be used to either support or challenge the view in the question. With Source A, responses were often able to discuss how Suffolk's letter to his son could be considered reliable as a private letter and could support this with reference to other members of the nobility who took advantage of Henry VI, or might be considered unreliable as Suffolk attempted to clear his name and referenced the considerable patronage he gained. In discussing Source B, many argued that it provided the strongest evidence to support the view and used the loss of land in France and the Treaty of Tours as evidence. There was again discussion of the provenance and the purpose of the manifesto, which although it was seen as trying to justify the action of the rebels following the discovery of Suffolk's body on the Kent coast, was seen as reliable given the contextual knowledge and Suffolk's promotion to a dukedom. Source C provided some candidates with a challenge, either because they did not read the provenance carefully and thought it was written by an Englishman or because they did not know enough about English actions in France. However, stronger answers referred to the failure to pay English troops. Source D was handled well by those who used contextual knowledge and were able to refer to the attack on Paston property by supporters of Suffolk. There was discussion of the letter being written by a supporter of Suffolk but to someone who would have been opposed to Suffolk and the lawless behaviour of his supporters. Most responses made specific reference to the sympathetic tone shown by the writer, but others did note that the source also appeared to give the impression that his death was deserved, even if the manner was not and again used contextual knowledge about his initial sentence and escape.

The strongest answers were able to bring together their explanation, use of contextual knowledge and consideration of provenance to reach a judgement about the sources as a group and the extent to which they support the view in the question, seen most clearly in the paragraph below, Exemplar 1.

Exemplar 1

In conclusion, sources ~~the~~ Card A's are balanced in that they hint at Suffolk's weaknesses but also show there were other factors that meant he wasn't at fault, source P is on the surface is entirely pro-Suffolk but in reality shows the very negative feelings of the people, similar to source B, demonstrating the will of the people in rebellion was against Suffolk and whilst this covers the failures of the king. Overall, it can be concluded that Suffolk was deserving of his reputation.

Section B overview

The two questions set are drawn from different key topics and candidates are required to recall, select and deploy appropriate knowledge and communicate this clearly and effectively. Candidates are expected to demonstrate abilities to explain, assess, analyse and reach substantiated judgements.

Question 2

England 1461–1509

2* How successful was the second reign of Edward IV (1471–83)?

[20]

There were many good and very good answers to this question, with many responses discussing a good range of issues. Most responses focused on Edward's ability to restore stability through his relationship with the nobility and restoring royal finances. Often his success in these areas was contrasted with his foreign policy where the early success in gaining money from France through the treaty of Picquigny was contrasted with later developments against France and Scotland. There was also some discussion concerning the Woodvilles and the succession, which allowed some to argue that it appeared a success in the immediate term, but a failure in the long term as Richard was able to take the throne. In discussing stability some contrasted this with his first reign, which was acceptable provided the balance of the answer was on the second. They were able to argue that Edward was successful because he was ruthless in his treatment of Henry VI and his son, Warwick and even Margaret of Anjou and that this was followed by removing Clarence. These responses often pointed to the lack of unrest, with few rebellions. The discussion of finances was often very full, with reference made to the Exchequer and Chamber system, the land experiment and crown lands, while the funds from Picquigny were also considered. Some did argue that his foreign policy was a success, but the strongest answers were more balanced and considered his whole reign. Some responses also discussed his management of the periphery, including Wales, Ireland and the North and this was also linked to the issue of law and order.

Exemplar 2 shows how a response reached an interim judgement about one of the issues before going on to reach an overall judgement based on a series of interim judgements, hence going to the top of Level 6.

Exemplar 2

Edward's policy towards the nobility was not entirely successful, whilst he had loyalty he also gained enemies. Initially he took up the policy of conciliation allowing Henry to regain his title after letting him in the courts and allowed Oxford to be forgiven once he submitted in 1473, but killed by killing Henry VI there was a great deal of success as

The Lancastrian party 'lost their' headquarters. Edward ruled through a few people, which his was successful in his reign but he made Gloucester too powerful, he gave him the Neville's lands and control of the north which allowed him to have enough power to take the throne from Edward V, it can also be said Edward did not do enough to reconcile the nobles to Woodville, this is clearly shown as he attempted to reconcile Hastings and Dorset (the senior Woodville) on his death bed, this left a lot of tension at court and against Edward's death, people sided against the Woodvilles who had Edward V and ultimately usurped him. Beaufort, for example felt very excluded from Edward's choice of Hastings Woodville and the Gloucester which bred tension and left Edward vulnerable. It can be argued Edward had some success with nobles, he was a strong king, for example taking the Earl of Pembroke from Herbert's son when he was not fulfilling the role, this proves him to be successful in attempting to do right by the country. However, other attempts at this, such as the limit on retaining.

was put in place but not carried through and therefore demonstrates Edward to be weak. His noble policy was successful for the duration of his reign but not overall as he could not secure his dynasty enough for his son to properly succeed to the throne.

In conclusion, Edward's reign was very partially successful, for the most part the ~~peace~~ foreign policy was successful, stability, law and order in the north and Wales was achieved and his economic policy can be seen as successful, however by the end of his reign the foreign policy was significantly ~~more~~ unsuccessful, he had only a little room in the chamber, there were elements of law and order which existed and whilst the nobility were loyal to Edward they were not loyal to his son. And therefore with the lack of foreign protection it can be argued Edward's reign was not successful overall as his son was usurped, usurped.

Question 3

- 3* 'The threat posed by the Pretenders underlined the essential weakness of Henry VII at home.'
How far do you agree? [20]

This question was approached in a variety of ways and, as the mark scheme makes clear, no set answer was required. However, it was essential that whatever approach was taken the question of the Pretenders and the extent to which they underlined the weakness of Henry was considered. Some responses focused almost entirely on the Pretenders and either argued that they did or did not, while other responses weighed up whether other issues revealed the essential weakness of Henry at home. These responses were often able to link the threat of the Pretenders to issues such as the nobility, his claim to the throne or finance. In considering the Pretenders, most were able to identify both Simnel and Warbeck, although there were some who considered de la Pole and Lovell to be Pretenders. The threat of the Pretenders was analysed, although it was surprising how many seemed unaware of the Battle of Stoke, but perhaps even more worrying was the threat posed by Simnel Warbeck, which appeared in a number of responses. A significant number discussed the legacy of the Wars of the Roses and argued that war weariness meant Henry was not weak, while others argued that his policies limited the threat to him. Although the focus was on his position at home, many noted that Henry's ability to make treaties and agreements with France, Spain and Scotland also limited the threat to him and that this was made very clear by the failure of Warbeck's invasion from Scotland. Responses also noted that the response to the Pretenders within England also revealed that he was not weak, with little support for either, seen with Simnel's march through the north west and Warbeck's failure at Deal.

The extract below provides an example of a response which reaches the top level through a developed conclusion, but which does not show developed interim judgements and is therefore at the lower end of Level 6.

Exemplar 3

In conclusion, whilst the pretenders did pose a threat to Henry VII, he was able to deal with this swiftly and it did not remain a pressing issue. The nobility here were less a major issue as they had the better chance of overthrowing Henry VII. This led to an urgent reaction from Henry VII and, whilst it was dealt with successfully, the chance of a powerful noble overthrowing him was always present as seen earlier in this period. As a result, whilst it is fair to say the threat of the pretenders was important, it was not to the level of importance that the issue of the nobility had which is why I agree with the statement to only a small extent.

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