

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y107/01 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

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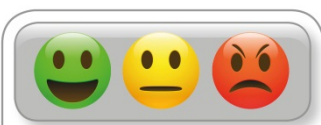
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Introduction

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 Y107/01 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 candidates 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 all 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

Mid Tudor Crises 1547–1558

- 1 Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that enclosure was the main cause of unrest in 1549. [30]

Although all of the sources made some reference to enclosure, most responses were able to argue that not all of the sources argued that it was the main cause. There were a number of responses that drifted to how serious the unrest was and did not focus on causes, which was essential if a high level was to be achieved. In discussing Source A, many argued that it did put forward it was the most important cause, pointing to 'have sent commissioners to reform enclosures' and suggesting that unless it was the main cause the Privy council would have not responded this way. Some also suggested that Privy Council would be anxious to deal with the main cause and suppress the unrest because of problems elsewhere and the concerns in Scotland. However, many were confused over the reference to the Bible and thought that meant either Kett's rebellion was about religion or confused Kett with the Western. The provenance was usually linked to the government wanting to deal with the main cause and therefore it was reliable and some linked this to the Kett/Flowerdew dispute. In dealing with Source B many responses commented that this source suggested there were a number of causes, including enclosure, including foodstuffs and religion. The reference to unrest in Devon and Cornwall allowed many to discuss the causes of the Western rebellion with some aware of the earlier demands that included reference to enclosures and the sheep tax. Discussion of the provenance varied from the simplistic comments about the role of the ambassador to discussion as to why he mentioned the issue of religion. Source C, on the surface appeared to be the most straightforward with responses stressing it mentioned enclosure and greed, the latter allowed contextual knowledge about class war to be used and there were particularly good examples of this from the Western rebellion. However, the provenance was a greater challenge and knowledge of the Commonwealthmen was very limited, with some suggesting because he was from the Commonwealth he would be abroad and therefore not know about events. The final source, Source D, caused some challenge as many did not pick up on the date and how that might have influenced the content. It was written in 1550 when Northumberland was gaining power and this may well have influenced the comments made in the last part of the source.

There were a number of very strong responses, as illustrated in Exemplar 1, where responses explained the source in relation to the question and evaluated using both contextual knowledge and provenance in order to reach a judgement as to how far the sources supported the view that enclosure was the main cause, taking the response shown into Level 6.

Exemplar 1

In conclusion, the sources generally do support the view that enclosure was the main cause of unrest in 1549, despite there being other reasons too. The sources that focus on enclosure primarily, sources ~~A and C~~ and A, do have a weaker prominence; Source B has a slightly stronger prominence and Source B the strongest. However they all suggest that enclosure was a definite cause of unrest, if not the main cause. Therefore, considering the sources and their provenance, it is fair to say that collectively they support the view that enclosure was the main cause of unrest in 1549. The fact that many of the attacks from these rebellions were on gentry, land lords and their enclosures, suggests that this view has much validity.

Section B overview

The two questions 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

Elizabethan England

2* How serious was the Catholic threat in the period from 1558 to 1589?

[20]

This was the more popular question and it gave candidates the opportunity to explore and analyse a large range of issues. Responses considered the start of Elizabeth's reign and the difficulty experienced in getting her settlement through parliament and this often led on to a discussion of the foreign threat in 1558-9. The strongest answers were adopted a balanced approach in their discussion of Philip and Spain, with the best answers arguing that Philip would not remove Elizabeth to see the French-backed Mary Stuart (Queen of Scots) on the throne. There was usually discussion of the threat from the papacy with many noting how long it took for the Pope to excommunicate Elizabeth, which allowed her to become more secure, lessening the threat. This was often linked to the arrival of Mary Stuart and the rising of the Northern Earls, the discussion of which was usually quite detailed, even if some thought Norfolk was rebelling with Westmoreland. In discussing Mary, there was also consideration of the plots with many arguing that they were not a threat because of the work of Walsingham. Many answers, particularly at the lower mark range focused on Mary and then the Armada, with discussion usually lacking balance. Some responses did drift into long accounts of the Armada, but in the strongest answers it was used to show how Elizabeth was able to nullify the Catholic threat by 1589 and even use it to create a sense of national unity. Responses also considered the threat of the Jesuits and seminary priests, as is shown in Exemplar 2 below, where there is good analysis of an issue and interim judgement is reached. If the response reached similar interim judgements about the issues discussed and then an overall judgement, it would reach Level 6.

Exemplar 2

In addition, the arrival of seminary priests and Jesuits too posed a threat to Elizabeth, but this threat was much more easily contained. The arrival of seminary priests in England in 1574 and Jesuits in 1580 were less concerned with directly threatening Elizabeth's position, but with

strengthening catholicism throughout the country, thus facilitating potential religious unrest. However, Elizabeth was fairly quick to react to these threats as she imposed a law in 1581 that made non-attendance at Anglican church services punishable in the form of fines. This essentially undid or at least reversed the fruits of the doctrinal reforms by the Jesuits and seminary priests as it enforced widespread commitment to protestant beliefs. Similarly, in 1585, the decree banning of all Jesuit activity in England led to some 133 Jesuits being prosecuted as their presence in England became an offence. This suggests that Elizabeth was fairly quick to react to the catholic threat and showed limited mildness in their toleration. Whilst the rather extreme actions does reveal something about the severity of the threat they posed to Elizabeth, her reactionary measures ensured that such threats were contained before materialising into a much wider form of public religious outrage.

Question 3

- 3* 'Unrest and rebellion never seriously threatened Elizabeth I in the period after 1588.' How far do you agree? [20]

This was a much less popular question. The strongest answers did discuss food riots and the Oxfordshire rising, using these to argue that rebellion was never a threat because of the measures Elizabeth had taken to deal with social challenges, such as poor harvests and poverty. The question was about unrest and the Essex rebellion provided the opportunity to discuss factional and parliamentary unrest in the period, which was taken up by the strongest answers, with discussion of monopolies and Elizabeth's Golden Speech featuring in some answers. The strongest responses balanced the apparent lack of threat from rebellion and unrest with the decline in Elizabeth's popularity due to her age, suggesting that by the turn of the century many were simply waiting for a new monarch. Some candidates misread the question and wrote about the whole of Elizabeth's reign, while some were very narrow in focus, considering just Essex and Tyrone.

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