

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y222/01 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 Y222/01 series overview

Y222 is one of twenty four Units for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about one hundred years through a short answer essay and a traditional essay. The paper contains two questions, each having two parts, a short answer essay and a traditional essay and candidates have to answer both parts of one question.

To do well on the short essay question (a), candidates need to consider the significance or importance both issues, factors, individuals or events mentioned in relation to the question. Having analysed or explained both they must reach a supported judgement as to which is the most important or significant.

To do well on the traditional essay 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"> • Gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short answer essay. • Reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important. • Linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question. • In answering the essay question candidates discussed at least two issues in depth. • The supporting detail was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic. • Reach a supported judgement about the issue in the question. • Make a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way. • Produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response. • Were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question. • Showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay. • Were unable to support their answer with relevant or accurate material. • Did not focus on the precise wording of the question. • Made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

Question 1 (a)

- 1 (a) Which of the following was of greater importance in prolonging the Korean War beyond December 1950?
- (i) divisions within the Western alliance
 - (ii) the intervention of the Chinese

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

This question was by far the more popular of the 2 questions. It elicited a range of responses although levels of success hinged on the understanding of the concepts involved. A number of weaker responses thought that the Western alliance was referring to the Cold War rivalry of the USSR and the USA and spent time discussing how the ideological disputes impacted on the policies in Korea, subsequently gaining little credit. Those who took this approach also generally included the rivalry between McArthur and Truman and so were able to partially redeem their answers. Weaker candidates gave a narrative account of Chinese intervention without making a comparative judgement.

Better responses were able to discuss the disputes between members of the Western alliance and the problems caused by language and cultural barriers among the armed forces present in Korea. A good introduction to these issues can be seen in the chosen example. When discussing the intervention of the Chinese candidates were more successful when they gave specific examples of where this intervention helped to prolong the war, for example with references to the battle at Choisin reservoir.

Exemplar 1

The decisions within the Western Alliance were of greater importance than the intervention of the Chinese, in prolonging the Korean War beyond December 1950. This is because the failures for the Western / UN nations to successfully cooperate came as a direct cause of these divisions. One such division came about between Canada and the US, with the Canadian Foreign Minister scolding MacArthur publicly for his wish to use atomic weapons in Korea, but more importantly because MacArthur had publicly insulted China's military, doing so despite how where Truman had forbidden statements. Another ~~sample of these Western divisions is between the US and Britain.~~ This helped to slow down Canadian support which ultimately prolonged the war. Another division could be seen between Britain and the US; Britain were more concerned about securing their colonies in ~~Asia~~ Malaya, than being involved in Korea, despite sending some troops. The still anti-colonial America still had difficulty adjusting to this. Events like US friendly fire on the British only hampered these decisions. Overall, the ~~various~~ divisions of the Western Alliance were ~~at least~~ of great importance in prolonging the war, but certainly slowed down foreign relations which ~~could~~ would have some effect.

Question 1 (b)

(b)* To what extent did Nixon achieve 'peace with honour' in Vietnam?

[20]

Most candidates found this question to be accessible and found the concept of "peace with honour" recognisable, mostly agreeing with the view put forward in the title. However the range of support offered varied widely. Weaker responses tended to include detail from outside the scope of the question, focusing on the dishonourable tactics of the USA under previous regimes as central to their argument.

Stronger responses were able to put forward valid arguments looking at both cases, with good accounts of Nixon's escalation of the war to Laos and Cambodia as evidence that he did not behave honourably. There were pertinent references to opposition at home, again used to support the counter-view. The exemplar highlights a candidate focusing on the "dishonourable" nature of the withdrawal. This was usually offset against the idea that the Americans did withdraw their troops, avoided the use of nuclear weapons and even built bridges with China. Surprisingly few made the comment that despite promising withdrawal in 1968, this process took 5 years.

Most candidates were able to include 2-3 factors and the better responses included several more.

Exemplar 2

However, Nixon was unsuccessful in achieving 'peace with honour', there was no honour in the President's exit from Vietnam. The situation on the homefront was so dire, that the process of Vietnamisation was rushed. This as a result, the US ended up leaving an economically unstable South Vietnamese government with an army trained in military tactics that were proven ineffective over the last decade. Poor harvests and inflation plagued South Vietnam in the wake early 1970s. The corruption of Thieu's government further hampered their stability. When the Americans left, they did not leave with honour. As they were leaving behind a state so unstable, that it was bound to fall. This means that the Americans were far from honourable in leaving behind a country in this mess, they were only concerned about seeing face.

Question 2 (a)

- 2 (a) Which of the following was of greater importance as a reason for the civil war in Cambodia, 1967–1970?
- (i) the Sihanouk regime
 - (ii) the communists in Cambodia

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

This was a question that relatively few candidates attempted. However, those who did were often knowledgeable and confident in their approach. Most candidates emphasised the corrupt nature of the regime, the counter-productive impact of the USA and the influence of Pol Pot. There was good knowledge of Sihanouk's trips to France and his inability to help the poorest, although many acknowledged his education improvements as something that increased opposition to him. This can be seen in the chosen example. Knowledge of the communists was less impressive, although Pol Pot's influence was noted in most answers. Better responses were able to link this to the conflict in Vietnam and the influx of communists from there. The best responses were also able to discuss the limited level of support for Cambodian communists and used this to make a fruitful evaluation in the conclusion.

Exemplar 3

The Sihanouk regime was arguably the most important reason for the civil war in Cambodia 1967-70. His regime was riddled with corruption, causing a frustration among the Cambodian peasants. As he was viewed as a 'god-like' figure by many Cambodians, the opposition to his leadership was augmented as there was great imbalance of power and those who supported him did so fervently. It is important, however, to bear in mind that Sihanouk's regime did not only inspire hatred, as he did achieve some significant

of educated Cambodians contributed to the growing frustration against the corrupt and undemocratic regime. Therefore, the Sihanouk regime was certainly of paramount importance as a reason for the civil war in Cambodia 1967-1970 as it was the basis for the subsequent communist uprising.

Successes Most notably, the education system under Sihanouk's regime was improved. From 1953 to 1967, the number of schools increased from 8 schools to 200, which shows that Sihanouk implemented some positive social changes in Cambodia. Taking on different views, however, it is justifiable to argue that an increase in the number

Question 2 (b)

(b)* 'The successful containment of communism in Malaya was due to the policies of the British government.' How far do you agree? [20]

This was generally well-answered. The question elicited a good level of response and the candidates who attempted the answer were, in the main, well equipped to answer it.

Most of the candidates agreed with the premise in the question and included a range of factors which supported their thinking. The factor most cited as influential was the 'strategic hamlets' initiative and there was generally some excellent knowledge of Sir Gerard Templer and his role in containing communism. Alongside his role candidates were also able to discuss the economic and political concessions made in order to win the "hearts and minds" of the population. Surprisingly few candidates questioned the brutality of the British tactics which may have proved to be a fruitful analysis of the view in the question. Arguing against this, responses focused on the weakness of the MCP and its lack of support from foreign powers such as China or the USSR. Many candidates were able to discuss the positive economic impact of the Korean War and used this to provide a good counterbalance to the view in the question. This can be seen in the example chosen.

Exemplar 4

The economic boom arguably played an important role in improving the situation that the British faced, and in ultimately helping them in their counter-insurgency efforts. As the Korean war (1950-1953) was looming, ~~the~~ Malaya experienced a sharp rise in the demand for tin and rubber as the Korean government needed it for artillery and military equipment, and 90% of ~~the~~ Asian tin and rubber came from Malaya. This contributed to the economic cycle entering a 'boom' phase.

which meant that there were decreased levels of unemployment, wages were rising and prices were falling, improving the overall standard of living. This was influential in the successful containment of communism as the Malaysians were reaping the benefits of a capitalist and democratic society, therefore reducing the communist appeal and limiting the significance of the MCP propaganda. Clearly, the economic state of Malaya played an important role in the successful containment of communism in Malaya.

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