

## **A LEVEL**

*Examiners' report*

# **HISTORY A**

**H505**

For first teaching in 2015

## **Y314/01 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 Y314/01 series overview

Y314 is one of twenty one components for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This component tests an extended period of History of at least one hundred years through an interpretation option on a named in depth topic and two essays. The paper is divided into two sections. In Section A candidates are required to use contextual knowledge to test the views of two historians about one of the three named in depth topics or an aspect of one. The question does not require them to comment on the style of writing or the provenance of the interpretation. In Section B candidates are required to answer two essay questions from a choice of three.

To do well on Section A, candidates need to explain the view of each interpretation in relation to the question and then evaluate the interpretation by the application of contextual knowledge. Responses should show an understanding of the wider debate connected to the issue.

To do well on Section B, candidates need to make connections and links across the whole period, explaining similarities and differences between the events they are discussing in order to show an awareness of continuity and change across the whole period unless instructed otherwise. The comparisons made may be either between periods within the topic or between regions. The strongest answers will test a hypothesis and reach a supported judgement.

<b><i>Candidates who did well:</i></b>	<b><i>Candidates who did less well:</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• showed a clear understanding of the views of the two interpretations in relation to the question</li> <li>• were able to use contextual knowledge to test the interpretations, linking that knowledge directly to the interpretation through evaluative words</li> <li>• were able to consider both the strengths and limitations of both interpretations using contextual knowledge</li> <li>• in answering the essay questions, covered the whole period in a balanced way</li> <li>• adopted a thematic approach</li> <li>• made links and comparisons between aspects of the topic</li> <li>• explained the links and comparisons</li> <li>• supported their arguments with precise and relevant examples</li> <li>• reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question</li> <li>• demonstrated an understanding and familiarity with the different command verbs e.g. identify, describe, explain and discuss.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• showed a limited understanding of one or both of the interpretations</li> <li>• did not go beyond a basic explanation of part of the interpretation</li> <li>• did not link any contextual knowledge directly to the interpretation and therefore did not evaluate the interpretation</li> <li>• in answering the essay adopted a chronological rather than thematic approach</li> <li>• did not make links or comparisons even if events from different parts of the period were discussed in the same paragraph</li> <li>• did not cover the whole period</li> <li>• did not focus on the precise wording of the question</li> <li>• made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.</li> </ul>

## Section A overview

To do well on Section A, candidates need to explain the view of each interpretation in relation to the question and then evaluate the interpretation by the application of contextual knowledge. Responses should show an understanding of the wider debate connected to the issue.

### Question 1

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the nature of the constitutional developments within the German state 1867–71. [30]

Most candidates did grasp that Passage A was arguing that the Liberals would find much to admire in the German constitution of 1871 (and even more so in the North German Confederation) but there was some confusion over Passage B's argument about the role of particularism with some mistakenly thinking it was arguing for Bismarck and Prussia's domination over the process. Stronger candidates brought in their knowledge of the 1867-71 period such as the southern states military alliance with Bismarck and the details of the 1871 constitution. While events outside the period such as the 1848 revolutions and the Kulturkampf could be made relevant, references to the Vienna Settlement or Weltpolitik were less useful.

Weaker responses struggled more with the passages and showed less developed knowledge of the constitutional events in this period.

There was a minor misprint on this question as it should have read 'German states'. We are pleased that our analysis during marking showed this had no impact on performance.

### Exemplar 1

The Constitution of the German Empire was ~~drawn~~ drawn up by Bismarck, meaning it was very Prussian-favouring, but it was clear that some concessions were made in order to convince the southern German states to join. Passage A argues that the nature of the constitutional developments within the German state 1867-71 was more to do with pleasing the liberals, whereas passage B argues that it was mainly due to the states particularism. Passage A is a more convincing explanation of these constitutional developments as during

This time, Bismarck was relying on the liberals for support.

Passage 4 argues that there were many parts of unification welcomed by liberals. These include, according to the passage, a parliament, a constitution, and a German Chancellor. It is correct that there were parts of the constitution welcomed by the liberals - in particular, the rule of law, which had been something the liberals had admired in France, 60+ years before. However, not all parts of the constitution would have been welcomed by liberals so Blackburn is incorrect to assert this.

The fact that the constitution gave so much power to authoritarian Prussia was unlikely to have pleased liberals, especially as the 17 seats given to Prussia in the Bundestag reflected the fact that the Prussian Landtag was conservative due to its three-tier voting system. This gave conservatives a disproportionate say in how the German empire was run. Another issue with passage 4 is that it says that the Confederation messed up the question of Germany's borders. Although this is true, Blackburn declines to mention the fact that

The liberals need also needed this up - during the Frankfurt parliament as they could not decide on whether Germany would be Klein or Gross. Passage 1 also asserts that constitutional developments were due to the power of the liberals. When it says that liberals 'looked to extend freedom through unity'. It is correct to say this as ~~the~~ most liberals ~~for~~ were nationalists at this time - actively looking to unify Germany. In addition to this, it is likely that liberals knew they could get constitutional concessions as, during this period, Bismarck was relying upon their support to unify the country. Passage 1 is also accurate in ~~to~~ stating that the German Empire was ~~looser~~ from the North German confederation. This flexibility was needed as the South German states were unlikely to give up all their power. Although this passage was ~~some~~ issues, particularly in saying that the constitution was liberal, despite the fact that it handed authoritarian Prussia the majority of the power, it is correct to say that much

of the nature of constitutional developments ~~developments~~ in this period were due to the power of liberalism, making it reasonably convincing.

Passage B is a good convincing explanation of the nature of the constitutional developments within the German state 1867-71.

The focus of this passage is the power that particularism had on the constitution. In the first ~~second~~ sentence it asserts that 'particularism was too important' to let Prussia have a dominant position in the new Germany. Although it is undeniable that particularism was important, it is inaccurate to state that Prussia did not have a dominant position in the structure of Germany. The Kaiser was the Prussian King, the Chancellor was the Minister-President of Prussia (with the caveat exception of Capri), and the Bundesrat was effectively controlled by Prussia as it had 17 seats while 14 were needed to veto. Passage B also says that matters of religion were left to the states.

While this may have been true at the time of the writing of the Constitution, the later Kulturkampf showed that Prussia was the real influential power over religion. Brose is accurate to say that matters of education were left to the states. The fact that states maintained taxation powers, is also testament to the power of particularism during this time.

~~Passage B gives too much weight to particularism, crediting it with~~ Passage B gives too much credit to the Reichstag for certain developments, such as the creation of a set of standard weights and measures. Much of the work for this had been done in the days of the Zollverein, so the vast majority of the states ~~to~~ already had these. There was only the Southern States and a few others who were incorporated into the Zollverein after the Austro-Prussian war, who needed to be included in these standardised systems. Brose also states that the Reichstag created a unified postal system. This is inaccurate as while the vast majority of states

had the same postal system, ~~Prussia~~ <sup>Bavaria</sup> had it only - a concession made in order to get them to agree to join the Empire. All of this ~~is~~ shows that passage B incorrectly attributes the constitutional developments of the German state to the Reichstag.

In conclusion, both passages have major flaws. The fact that passage A says the constitution of the German Empire was liberal is Blackbourn's major flaw, whilst the main ~~is~~ issue with passage B is that it gives too much emphasis to the importance of particularism and the reforms made by the Reichstag, without mentioning liberalism. This is a huge weakness as ~~the Reichstag~~ <sup>liberalism</sup> was the main nationalist political stance at the time. All of this means that passage A is the more convincing as an explanation of the nature of the constitutional developments within the German state in the period 1867 - 1871.

Exemplar 1 is typical of a Level 6 response with strong evaluation and use of own knowledge to test the arguments in the passages.

## Section B overview

To do well on Section B, candidates need to make connections and links across the whole period, explaining similarities and differences between the events they are discussing in order to show an awareness of continuity and change across the whole period unless instructed otherwise. The comparisons made may be either between periods within the topic or between regions. The strongest answers will test a hypothesis and reach a supported judgement.

### Question 2

- 2\* 'Intellectual forces played only a limited role in the creation and development of German nationalism throughout the period from 1789 to 1919.' How far do you agree? [25]

Strong candidates benefitted from an explanation of how they were defining 'intellectual forces' early in the essay and how these forces changed and developed throughout the period. Some usefully divided their essay into the creation and development of German nationalism so they could compare the role of intellectual forces to other factors within each of these. Those that were determined to divide the essay into multiple themes such as political, economic, cultural, military, and xenophobic nationalism sometimes produced a very convoluted and tricky argument to follow. Some candidates made the assumption that illiterate peasants and labourers could not have any nationalistic feeling simply because they could not read the works of Goethe. This was often followed by the claim that better education allowed anti-semitic xenophobic nationalism to develop later in the period.

Weaker candidates knew little about intellectual forces and even those that did sometimes assumed that they played no role at all after the 1848 revolutions.

### Question 3

- 3\* 'Metternich was more effective in managing German nationalism than Napoleon, Bismarck or Wilhelm II.' How far do you agree? [25]

This was the most popular of the essay questions and produced some excellent responses which used themes such as political, cultural and military nationalism to compare the four rulers successes over the period. Some defined what they understood by 'managing German nationalism' in their introductions which was an effective way to compare such disparate figures which such different aims as Metternich and Bismarck for example. Some candidates chose to address each individual minister/ruler in a separate paragraph and this approach seldom got out of Level 4 although some synthesis in the conclusion could tip it into the bottom of Level 5.

Weaker responses often left Napoleon out completely and had little to say beyond describing the careers of the other three often at some length and with little attempt to judge how effective they were in managing German nationalism.

## Question 4

- 4\* 'German nationalism had mass support only at times of war.' How far do you agree with this view of the period 1789 to 1919? [25]

This was the least popular essay question but there were some very good answers that both recognised that wars did not always engender mass support for German nationalism (the Austro-Prussian war for example) and that mass support was also seen during peace time (the 1848 revolutions, 1840 Rhine Crisis and the popularity of the Navy and Pan German Leagues for example). However weaker responses often left out the period between fighting Napoleon and the Wars of Unification in the 1860s and a few had little to say outside Bismarck's wars and the outbreak of World War One. There was also occasionally a lack of focus on 'mass' support and essays became a chronological description of the development of German nationalism in the period.

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