

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y317/01 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 Y317/01 series overview

Y317 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.

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

Section A overview

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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 causes of the First Opium War. [30]

The interpretation question was, on the whole, answered well. The majority of candidates were able to access the higher levels by clearly linking their own knowledge to the views and opinions mentioned. At the top end, candidates used precise and accurate own knowledge, explaining that A reflects the internal causes whereas B argues the converse view, that the First Opium War began due to the actions of the British.

The most successful answers dealt with each interpretation in turn before coming to a measured conclusion. Answers which attempted a thematic approach often were confused and lacked evaluation, leading to an essay-like approach. Centres should be aware that credit is given in assessing the relative convincingness of the views that are present in each interpretation. Answers which proceeded to list impacts that were not present in each interpretation did not score highly, as they were not explicitly evaluating the view of each historian. This was often highlighted or prefixed by the phrase "fails to mention". Candidates would be better advised to focus on the actual views presented and test them against historical knowledge.

Centres should also be aware that there is no requirement to mention other historians.

In regard to Interpretation A, the majority of candidates were able explain the role of opium and the impact of the opium trade. Those at lower levels merely described the interpretation. As for Interpretation B, most were able to identify its key message that the war began due to the British. In the lower levels, however, many mentioned the fact that there was no direct exploration of the opium trade, rather than focusing on the content of Interpretation B.

Exemplar 1 was marked in Level 6.

Exemplar 1

Passage A is convincing as it argues that a cause of the opium war was the societal effects of opium. However, passage A is not convincing as it states that a main cause what that was that Imperial decrees against opium were ignored which is unconvincing as the reality was the government was rapidly running out of finance. Passage B is convincing in arguing that Chinese constraints on foreigners was a cause of the opium war but is unconvincing in its argument that it was the safety of British safety of British citizens that was the most important cause of the opium war. Overall, passage A is more convincing than passage B.

Passage A is convincing in arguing that a cause of the opium war was societal effects of opium. The passage states that "the seeming ineffectiveness of the administration... due to their poisoning by the foreign drug, opium". Opium was causing harm to the traditional views of social harmony, with thousands of addicts ~~had~~ flooding the streets and disrupting the Confucian views of order.

This is significant as Lin's Anti opium campaign was fuelled by the anger amongst ~~chinese~~ the Chinese for imposing what was described as a 'poisonous drug' onto China when it was illegal in Britain. Lin wrote a letter to Queen Victoria asking "Where is your conscience?" Furthermore, this is significant as it led to the arrest of 1600 addicts. This showcases how the social effects of opium were so great that action had to be taken against addicts as well as against opium stocks. Therefore, the passage is convincing in its argument that opium was a disruption to Chinese society which had to be removed to maintain the norms of harmony and order.

On the other hand, Passage A is unconvincing in its argument that a cause of the main cause of the Opium war was 'Imperial Decree prohibiting the drug ~~was~~ being ported'. Although this did play a small role, it was the mistranslation of an official document that created a misunderstanding of opium becoming legal which increased opium stocks to China.

However, it is arguably the economic cost of opium which was a larger cause in the start of the first opium war. The Chinese treasury was being rapidly drained of its finances and China was paying out \$ 18 million annually for opium imports. This would've created strain on the Chinese government whom also had to consider paying the 'military to suppress' the growing social disorder. Thus, the ban on opium perhaps played a minute role in the start of the opium war as it was the imbalance of exports and imports ~~as well as~~ as well as the increasing lack of funds which is what caused one government to seize opium stocks in Canton in 1839.

Passage B is convincing in arguing that a cause of the opium war was 'Chinese constraints on trade and confinement of the Western traders to Canton'. This suggests it was the Chinese' hostility towards 'too many foreigners' which created tensions and thus played a part in causing the first opium war. The Chinese government placed emphasis on Chinese superiority over foreign nations and perceived ~~foreign~~

international relations from a sinocentric perspective. This can be seen by the denial of western diplomats entrance to the Summer Palace unless they performed Kowtow, a gesture of submission to the Qing. Additionally, traders were only granted rights to trade in Canton, and this is significant as the main outcome of the Opium war was the granting of trading rights in 11 ports. Therefore, 'Chinese constraints on trade' was clearly of importance to the start of the Opium war, showing how Passage B is convincing in its argument.

On the other hand, Passage B is unconvincing in arguing that it was the 'safety of British men, women and children' that was a cause of the Opium war. Arguably, it was not the safety of the British that triggered the Opium war but British expansionism. Britain wanted to impose its commercial interests in China as the demand for chinoserie and such as silk and tea was increasing in Britain. This is evidenced by the East India Company transferring 40,000 chests of opium to China despite no

genuine demand. This suggests Britain was aiming to create dependence force China to be dependent on them in order to establish a secure hold on China's resources/goods. Therefore, it was not the 'safety of British men' that motivated the British to increase opium stocks, which led to tension that created war, but it was their economic and political ideas of imperialism that was the bigger cause. Thus, Passage B is unconvincing in its argument.

Overall, Passage A is more convincing than Passage B as Confucian values were of upmost importance in China, and was entwined with all aspects of society. Therefore the increase of Opium was disrupting the deeply engrained views of harmony, threatening the order in China and presenting Britain as the enemy. This triggered a response from Lin and the Chinese government to arrest addicts and destroy opium, ~~but the rest~~ which caused retaliation from the British and started to of the Opium War.

Section B overview

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Question 2

- 2* 'The nature of Chinese government saw more continuity than change in the period 1839–1989.'
How far do you agree? [25]

This was answered by a large number of candidates. Following the trend of the previous series the majority of candidates approached the question thematically, using, for example, the themes of structure of government, ideology and repression. A smaller number of candidates who had less success in this question referred to the economy of China, which could not be given.

At the top end, candidates assessed three or four rulers within each paragraph, evaluating the level of continuity or change in each area. Successful responses utilised the word "similarly" and then explained the level of continuity (or change). Finally, answers in the top level contained interim assessments (or end of paragraph judgements) before writing a developed conclusion.

At the lower end of the mark range candidates approached their answer either:

A - chronologically

or

B – were unable to compare rulers within thematic paragraphs.

Question 3

- 3* 'Chinese governments failed to modernise the economy throughout the period 1839–1989.'
How far do you agree? [25]

This was a popular question. Candidates were able to identify themes and evaluate the level of modernisation across the whole period.

At the top end, candidates selected three themes (often agriculture, trade and industry) and assessed three or four rulers from across the time period, evaluating the level of modernisation (or lack of). Successful candidates focused on the phrase "did not modernise" and assessed in relation to this. Answers in the top level contained interim assessments (or judgements) before writing a developed conclusion.

At the lower end of the mark range candidates approached their answer either:

A - chronologically

or

B – were unable to compare rulers within thematic paragraphs.

Question 4

- 4* 'The Communist takeover of 1949 was the most significant turning point in the development of Chinese society in the years 1839–1989.' How far do you agree? [25]

This was also a popular question. Candidates were able to focus on thematic paragraphs that were related to society (for example education, women's rights and religion).

At the top end, candidates used the communist takeover of 1949 at the start of each paragraph before comparing it to two other turning points (in each paragraph). Successful answers were able to compare throughout the paragraph (this was a greater turning point than.. because..) and then assess at the end. The best conclusions assessed the communist takeover in each theme to reach a sustained judgement.

At the lower end of the mark range, candidates wrote about three turning points in total, either chronologically or as factors.

Furthermore, centres should be aware that this style of question is not designed to assess whether two events were similar or not; it is about assessing change. Candidates should be encouraged, therefore, to come to a sustained judgement about the importance of the event in the question in relation to others; not whether it was similar to them. Finally, candidates who did not cover the whole time period were not able to reach the higher levels.

Exemplar 4 was marked in Level 6

Exemplar 4

Throughout Chinese society in the years 1889-1989 there were developments in society however not all of them were always for the better. There were many areas of development in society including healthcare, women and religion. The Communist takeover of 1949 was the most significant turning point in the development of Chinese society during this period.

In terms of healthcare 1949 was the most significant turning point as it saw the health of the entire country improve not just for the elite which was what it was like previously. The average life expectancy increased to 57 from 36 under Mao and this was due to his reforms in healthcare. The young were educated on spotting infectious diseases, talks were given out at village level to peasants on sanitation and hygiene and during the Cultural Revolution over 1 million barefoot doctors were trained in a 6 month crash course programme to go and aid the peasants. This was not the first time barefoot doctors had been used as they were also present during the Nanjing decade 1927-1937, however unlike with the Nanjing government the scale under which they were used had never been seen before showing this to be a turning point. Also with the Nanjing they hardly developed healthcare as much as they wanted to as seen with the problem of opium addiction which they could not tackle as underworld gangs including the Green gang ran this trade and they had supported the GMD financially. This lack of

development is why the Nanjing decade could not be a turning point. Furthermore, 1949 is a turning point in terms of healthcare as unlike with other leaders during this period such as under the Qing who left villagers to fend for themselves with herbs and flowers, the CCP claimed to improve healthcare for peasants across the country. While the Qing good healthcare was only available for the elite who could afford it, 1949 is also the turning point as under Mao's CCP for the first time in this period doctors who were meant to be part of the privileged class were attacked during the Great Cultural Revolution. They were forced to put operations aside in favour of cleaning toilets with those lower in class than them, this was the first time privileged members of society were forced to do this and whilst it may not have developed healthcare for the better it was a major change again showing the turning point. Overall healthcare ~~but~~ in 1949 was a turning point as a lot of firsts happened during this period.

Regarding women, 1949 was again a turning point in this area. The CCP formally outlawed footbinding which both the Nationalists under Yuan Shikai Sun Yat-sen and the GMD Nanjing government under Jiang Jieshi failed to enforce despite also banning it. The fact it never returned after 1949 shows it to be a turning point.

This was also a turning point ~~as~~ for women as the 1950 marriage law saw a lot of firsts granted to women in terms of allowing them to get a divorce, raising their legal marriage age to 18 and ban, banning concubinage

and recognising man and woman as equals before the law. This would have been unthinkable under the Qing where concubinage was freely allowed with the Emperors themselves having many and also due to the fact that the Confucius teachings such as women obeying the man in their family were a large enforced part of society. Therefore the fact 1949 brought about change of this magnitude shows it to be a turning point for women. Although under the Nanjing government with the New Culture Movement support was given to women's liberation and the ending of the patriarchy as unlike with the CCP this was never enforced in law it did not bring about much development for women. However 1949 may not be seen as a turning point for women as though the CCP did encourage allow women to work as is seen through the Great Leap forward with them taking on more the more dangerous labour of men in factories, women also worked under the late Qing period in foreign factories suggesting more continuity than change. However, overall as the most freedom was given to women under the CCP 1949 remains the turning point in this area of development.

In terms of religion, religious minorities were nearly always persecuted throughout this period however as the greatest persecution happened under Mao 1949 again is a turning point. The Cultural Revolution saw religion being attacked as one of the 4 olds with clergy being imprisoned and church property destroyed.

The 1950 campaign against religion saw the peasants forbidden to practice in public. Patriotic churches were the only churches allowed under Mao which was the first time the Vatican rejected Catholics in China as the Pope did not recognise these churches. The Buddhist Tibetans saw PLA forces overtake control in a violent and bloody conflict that lasted 6 months. Whilst under the Qing there was the Tianjin massacre that saw 4 churches burned and 400 Chinese Christians killed and again under with the Boxer uprising Chinese Christians were attacked as one of the hairy men. As these attacks were not continuous unlike with the ones during Mao's CP, 1949 remains the turning point as this was when the greatest persecution occurred. Moreover at the start of the period during the 1880s Jesuits and other missionaries were actually tolerated again supporting this. Overall 1949 saw more development in religious persecution.

To conclude the Communist takeover of 1949 was the most significant turning point in the development of Chinese society in the years 1889-1989 as it saw more change in terms of healthcare, women and religion than any other period. There were a number of areas that the CCP introduced that thought these 3 areas.

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