

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y108/01 Summer 2022 series

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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. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. 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 and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

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Paper Y108 series overview

Y108 is one of thirteen units for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about fifty years through an Enquiries or source-based option and an essay. The paper is divided into two sections. In Section A candidates have to answer a compulsory source questions based on four written primary sources. The question requires them to use all four sources to assess the validity of a view. In Section B candidates are required to answer one essay 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

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considered the provenance of the sources and used relevant contextual knowledge • clearly linked the contextual knowledge 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 use contextual knowledge to evaluate the sources • wrote an unbalanced response in their treatment of the sources, with very little consideration of one of the sources • reached a judgement based on their knowledge rather than on the strength of the sources or did not make a judgement at all • showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay • were unable to support their response with relevant material • did not focus on the precise wording of the question • made unsupported comments and assertions about issues.

Section A overview

The Enquiry section in this unit examines the emergence of the Levellers and the threat they posed. The question requires candidates to critically assess evidence and reach judgements. The critical evaluation of sources is the central theme in this section with all marks awarded against AO2.

Question 1

The Execution of Charles I and the Interregnum 1646–1660

- 1 Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that the Levellers were a dangerous threat to society. [30]

The four sources provided a range of views about the Levellers and the threat they posed and were drawn from a wide chronological period allowing candidates the opportunity to place the sources in context. While sources B and C seemed to clearly support the view that they were a threat, Sources A and D led to much more debate.

Source A did raise an interesting issue about Leveller demands and while we might not see some of the issues as threatening candidates do need to see this from the perspective of the seventeenth century when such demands would have been. However, in arguing they were a threat many did pick up on the almost threatening point that they would hear from them again. Some were able to place this in context of the jailing of Leveller leaders and the situation regarding negotiations with Charles, while others commented on the scale of Leveller appeal.

In discussing Source B some did consider the obvious threat presented by the Leveller mutiny which was used to support Cromwell's view of anarchy but very few commented on his socially conservative views, although many commented on the purpose of the source.

Most argued that Source C did show them as a threat and were able to use parts of the source to support their argument and then considered how many Levellers at the time actually wanted Charles' death. This source provided the easiest access for comments on provenance, but many found it harder to use contextual knowledge, although comments about the Second Civil War and negotiations with Charles were often used well.

In discussing Source D some showed valuable knowledge of Hutchinson's husband, although this was not essential, in order to evaluate the source. What was most notable was the number of candidates who did not pick up on the date, that it was written during the reign of Charles II and, therefore, there was the question of the regicides. There were too many responses where we saw uncreditable stock provenance such as comments about it being written much later so she would have forgotten things or that she was not there and would have relied on what her husband told her. Candidates need to focus on making their evaluation tailored to the question, how it affects their view of the source for the purposes of the investigation.

Exemplar 1 is part of a response where a candidate provides a limited judgement about the sources, given their provenance, in relation to the question and therefore they reached Level 5. In order to go higher in the level this would need to be developed and to reach Level 6 there would be judgements after discussing each source.

Exemplar 1

		<p>Ultimately, the sources mainly support the view, with Sources B and C directly agreeing, and source A partially agreeing that the Levellers threatened social order but were not dangerous.</p>
		<p>Source D largely opposes the statement. Whilst sources A, B and C appear coloured by the motivations of the authors to endorse a certain opinion of the Levellers as wanting to overturn the existing social order, they outweigh source D's opposition to the view. Thus, although source A frames the Levellers as threatening the existing social order in a positive way because of the existing social order being oppressive, it ultimately bolsters the views provided in source B and C. The sources thus support the view to a large extent, certainly concurring in presenting the Levellers' radicalism as a threat, but differing in the extent to which this threat was <u>dangerous</u>.</p>

Section B overview

Two essays are set, each from a different Key Topic. The questions set require candidates to analyse the causes and consequences of major historical issues.

Question 2*

The Early Stuarts 1603–1646

2* How serious were the disputes between James I and his parliaments?

[20]

This was the more popular question. More successful responses focused not on the causes of the disputes but on how serious they were, the focus of the question. The stronger responses often noted that the disputes were not as serious as those under Charles I, although some did comment on the Addled Parliament and James' decision not to call Parliament between 1614 and 1621. Most responses discussed issues such as Divine Right, prerogative, finance and foreign policy. In discussing Divine Right some noted that although James believed in it in practice he did not try to uphold it meaning disputes were not as serious as they could have been. When considering privileges there was discussion of the Shirley case and how James gave way which was used to show that the disputes were not serious, although some did contrast that with the Protestation and the tearing out of the page in the journal. Finance occupied the greater part of many responses but very often candidates wanted to answer a different question which focused on why it caused disputes, rather than how serious they were. A similar situation was seen in considering foreign policy, although in linking it to religious concerns some were able to make some valid points about its severity.

Assessment for learning



It is important that candidates pay close attention to the actual wording of the question, this was not about the causes of disputes but how serious the disputes were. Responses that simply explained causes were partial responses and placed in Level 3.

Question 3*

3* How successful was Personal Rule?

[20]

Although a less popular question the responses were often strong. Most were able to consider the issues of religion and finance. In discussing these factors there was often a detailed range of supporting evidence, particularly with reference to financial figures. The strongest responses often established a range of criteria against which to judge success, with many concluding that it appeared successful in the short term as policies were implemented and Charles appeared to have brought stability while removing Parliament, with which he had been in dispute.

However, many were able to argue that in the longer run it was not successful, noting the decline in income following the Hampden Case and the problem of religion, most notably in Scotland. Some argued that without the issue of Scotland it might have continued to be successful, while others suggested that it was successful for much of the time, but that its collapse was sudden. Discussions also took in the policy of Thorough and the situation in Ireland; this allowed for an even greater range of issues to be discussed with many suggesting that, in the short term, Ireland was a success and that for the first time it was ruled efficiently.

Exemplar 2 demonstrates a very well developed conclusion where the judgement is clear and this follows a series of developed interim judgements at the end of each paragraph. For these reasons it was placed towards the top of Level 6.

Misconception



Ireland and Scotland should not be seen as foreign policy.

Exemplar 2

		<p>Ultimately, Charles' Personal Rule was initially successful in financial terms, as he was not fighting a war, so could profit the nation using arbitrary taxation. However, the polarisation caused by his religious policy was largely unsuccessful, and created the circumstances that led to the Bishops' Wars, which exposed the unsustainability of Charles' financial policy in times of war, this revealing its inherent weaknesses. However, the policy of Thorough was successful to an extent, although not sufficiently successful to outweigh the failures of financial and religious policy during Personal Rule. Therefore, Personal Rule was ultimately initially successful, but only to a small extent in its entirety.</p>
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