

**GCSE (9-1)**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY B**

## **(SCHOOLS HISTORY PROJECT)**

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**J411**

For first teaching in 2016

**J411/42 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

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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## Paper 42 series overview

Paper 42 was The Elizabethans, 1580-1603.

To do well on the British Depth Study, candidates need to be able to analyse and compare interpretations; devise historical questions; and recall and apply their knowledge to support and challenge a historical interpretation in an essay-style question.

It was clear from the majority of responses that most candidates had been well-prepared and were able to deploy their knowledge accurately on the essay-style questions. However, while their approach was sound and many candidates knew to attempt a balanced argument, some candidates misunderstood the focus of the question and wrote about aspects of the course that were not relevant to Questions 3 and 4.

Generally candidates performed well on Question 2. Most were able to consider and compare the overall impressions of the two interpretations. Additionally, many demonstrated they had understood that the author of B specialises in researching violence against women. Some fell back on simplistic comparisons of provenance in their attempts to explain the differences between the two.

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"> <li>• picked out a feature relevant to bravery in Interpretation A and then supported this with two points of development (Question 1(a))</li> <li>• used Interpretation A to ask a historical question (i.e. based on a second-order concept such as causation, which tended to be the more successful approach) and gave some kind of indication of how that might help us to further understand the threat from Catholic Spain to Elizabethan England (Question 1(b))</li> <li>• compared the overall message about the causes of witch hunts in Interpretations B and C, and went on to give a reason that they differed, based on these specific interpretations (e.g. given the author of B) (Question 2)</li> <li>• effectively deployed a range of knowledge in the essay question, using precise evidence to support their responses (Questions 3 and 4).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• picked out a feature that was difficult to develop with a link to bravery (Question 1(a))</li> <li>• asked a question that was not about the threat from Catholic Spain, or described what they already knew about the Armada, overlooking the historical enquiry (Question 1(b))</li> <li>• summarised Interpretations B and C separately or made simplistic and inaccurate comparisons around provenance relating to Historians being less biased (Question 2)</li> <li>• made accurate but generalised points but were unable to support with precise evidence - or gave precise evidence that was not relevant to the question (e.g. Royal Progresses Question 3 or Armada Question 4).</li> </ul>

## Question 1 (a)

### The Elizabethans, 1580–1603

- 1 (a) In **Interpretation A**, the author H.E. Marshall gives the impression that England was brave in standing up to Catholic Spain in 1588.

Identify and explain **one** way in which she does this.

[3]

The aim of this question is to get candidates thinking about the methods used by writers, artists, filmmakers, etc. to put forward a particular interpretation of a historical figure, period or event.

Most candidates were able to access the interpretation and they understood the question. Most scored 1 mark by picking out a specific feature (e.g. 'Our little green island in the lonely sea...') and then those able to progress to 2 or 3 marks went on to develop their response by explaining how that feature made England seem brave. Where candidates started with a very specific feature such as this they often struggled to make two points of development about their feature, and sometimes neglected to link it convincingly to bravery.

Responses which picked out several features rather than one feature, as the question asks, were unable to be rewarded separate marks for separate features.

#### Advice to centres

In this question, candidates should aim to pick out just one method used in the interpretation and go on to make two points of development about that to address the question asked.

## Question 1 (b)

- (b) If you were asked to do further research on one aspect of **Interpretation A**, what would you choose to investigate?

Explain how this would help us to analyse and understand the threat from Catholic Spain to Elizabethan England.

[5]

The idea of this question is to test candidates' ability to come up with a genuine historical enquiry, using the interpretation as a starting point.

Most candidates were able to ask a question or indicate something that they would like to find out. At the lower end, these were typically things such as finding out about the people/events/objects in Interpretation A – not based on second-order concepts.

Better responses framed their questions around a second-order concept such as causation, with a typical enquiry being: Why did Spain lose the battle?

Few candidates were able to go on to indicate how this might help us to analyse and understand the threat from Catholic Spain to Elizabethan England.

A minority of candidates misunderstood the question or the interpretation and either told us things they knew rather than asking a question or identifying an area for further investigation or asked a question relating to Elizabethan England in general that was not specific to the threat of the Armada. Several candidates, who may have been advised to use certain words such as 'significance' or 'diversity', sometimes struggled to place these within their response successfully.

Very few candidates were able to offer a valid line of enquiry based on second-order concept to compare to an impression given by Interpretation A, for example 'Causation – Interpretation A gives us the impression that the conflict between England and Spain was a religious crusade by the King of Spain, who "hated the Protestant religion". I would like to investigate other reasons for the war. This would help us to understand whether religion was a more important cause than things like the actions of English sailors like Drake attacking Spanish ports in the New World'.

**Advice to centres**

This question does not require candidates to answer their question and it is not asking what candidates already know. Although it is expected that candidates are familiar with the concept of historical enquiry, there is no requirement that they use particular words or phrases and sometimes it is counter-productive for them to do so. Candidates should also make sure that they consider the second part of the question, i.e. pick a question that will help further understanding of X.

**Exemplar 1**


1	10	<p>I would choose to investigate the difference in the Spanish and English's Spanish's and the English's response to combat. This would <del>allow</del> help us identify how big of a threat the Spanish was and it could help us understand how they went from being overly prepared to being defeated. This could be done by studying their tactics and also the lack of communication they had with the troops in the Netherlands.</p> <p>By comparing this with England's. It would give a clearer understanding of how the English had an advantage because of their plans and more advanced vessels.</p>
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In Exemplar 1, by asking a question about how big a threat the Spanish were, the candidate identifies a valid line of enquiry based on the second-order concept of significance (Level 2, 3 marks). They go on to suggest how this enquiry would help us understand the threat (Level 2, 4 marks).

## Question 2

**2 Interpretations B and C** both focus on accusations of witchcraft in Elizabethan England.

How far do they differ and what might explain any differences? **[12]**

 Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology **[5]**

This question offers candidates the opportunity to show that they can identify the different ways that historical events, periods, or figures are presented, and explain why they may differ.

The interpretations in this question both focus on allegations of witchcraft in Elizabethan England. They were accessible to most candidates, the majority of whom were able to make a valid comparison of the messages of each interpretation regarding the reasons behind accusations of witchcraft.

The most successful responses usually explained the differences in terms of the purpose of B. For example this was a typical sort of response: 'B places more emphasis on misogyny because the author specialises in researching violence against women. Her book describes her views as 'feminist'. It's therefore likely that she will view historical events through this lens and pay less attention to, or minimise, other explanations of persecution of witches. She is more likely to highlight the role of misogyny'.

However, some candidates tended to fall back on undeveloped comments about provenance, for example, 'B is by a feminist so will be biased but C is written by a historian who isn't biased'.

A minority of responses stayed in Level 1 because they either dealt with the interpretations separately, with no valid comparison, or else compared the provenance of the interpretations rather than their content.

Only a very few misunderstood the question and attempted to evaluate the interpretations by explaining how reliable they were given what they had learned – which is not what the question is asking.

### Advice to centres

Candidates should take a moment before beginning their response to consider, 'What impression does the author (or artist, etc.) want to give me about X?' They should then select details from the extract (or image) to support their response. They should also be encouraged to consider specific reasons that a particular organisation or individual might want to give us that impression. Because these will be interpretation-specific, it is important that candidates are given numerous opportunities to 'bump into' historical interpretations to practise this kind of thing routinely. Generic or pre-learned responses will rarely make it to the higher levels.

Exemplar 2

2	<p>Interpretation B and Interpretation C are different as B <del>focuses on</del> blames misogyny as the reason for the witchcraft trials, whereas C shows a more general view of the causes - not blaming it on any specific factor. Interpretation B argues that the witch trials were caused by male domination over women, and it's clear this was another outlet for men to try and 'maintain their power over women'. Interpretation C differs as they <del>do</del> think witch hunts weren't 'simply' male attacks on women. This is why they differ as <del>soon</del> Interpretation C concludes many factors to be the cause (e.g. 'village tension, religious beliefs, etc'), whereas Interpretation C view misogyny to be the root <del>of</del> cause.</p>
	<p><del>Inter</del> Interpretation B <del>was</del> was written by a <del>30</del> woman who specialises in researching 'violence against women'. This is why she holds the opinion that witch trials were an attack on women as she's likely to be more <del>aggressive</del> <del>aggressive</del> <del>aggressive</del> in support of the idea that 'misogyny' was the root cause as it's her job to highlight times when</p>




2		women have been suppressed. <del>during</del>
		<del>the</del> interpretation C however
		won't <del>have</del> focus on this perspective
		as he is not a specialist in the field
		of 'violence against women' so he's
		likely not to <del>argue</del> argue this view as he
		<del>may</del> may not understand the full
		extent of the issue. He takes a more
		general view as he is not a specialist so
		he's just listing the many theories on
		why the witchcraft trials took place.

In Exemplar 2, by explaining that B specifically blames misogyny for witchcraft trials, as compared to C which shows a more general view of the causes, the candidate makes a valid comparison of portrayals in both interpretations. They explain this difference in portrayal using support from both B and C. They go on to explain the difference through a developed point about the specific purpose of the author of B. This is a Level 4 response.

### Question 3

3\* According to the Historical Association's website, Elizabethan views about the poor were 'compassionate' (kind and caring) towards the end of the reign.

How far do you agree with this view of Elizabethan responses towards the poor between 1580 and 1603? [20]

() Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology [5]


Candidates had clearly studied Elizabethan explanations and responses and most knew what the question was asking. The quality of the responses varied, but many were able to demonstrate their depth and range of knowledge. Most often, the points raised by candidates to support the interpretation were 1601 Poor Law, poor rates and the 'impotent' poor being looked after in alms houses. The most popular points raised to challenge the interpretation were concerning vagabonds and their harsh treatment. Some candidates used the poor rate to disagree arguing that as it was a mandatory tax it was not charitable giving and therefore not compassionate.

However, in a few cases, candidates were unable to direct their knowledge at the specific question being asked about whether Elizabethan views towards the poor were compassionate. Instead, they fell back on generalised responses about living conditions in Elizabethan England. These responses were generally placed in Level 1. Some candidates using invalid knowledge such as Royal Progresses or groundlings have cheaper theatre seats. Such points were not credited.

## Question 4

- 4\* According to the BBC Bitesize website, it was the Puritans who posed the 'greatest threat' to Elizabeth **within Parliament and the Court** between 1580 and 1603.

How far do you agree with this view of threats to Elizabeth from within Parliament and the Court between 1580 and 1603? **[20]**

() Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology **[5]**

Candidates had clearly studied Elizabeth and her parliaments including opposition from Puritans and many knew what the question was asking. The quality of the responses varied, but many were able to demonstrate their depth and range of knowledge. Most often, the points raised by candidates to support the interpretation were specific examples of Puritan opposition such as Wentworth and Stubbs. The most popular points raised to challenge the interpretation were concerning the Earl of Essex.

In a few cases candidates were unable to direct their knowledge at the specific question being asked about whether it was the Puritans who posed the 'greatest threat' to Elizabeth within **Parliament and the Court** between 1580 and 1603. Instead, candidates used invalid knowledge of threats outside Parliament and the Court, such as threats from Catholic plots or the Spanish Armada. Such points were not credited.

### Advice to centres

Candidates who have revised thoroughly and have a wide range of precise evidence at their fingertips to support their points will do best on these questions. It is also very important that candidates are familiar with the terms laid out by the specification, and that they are explicit in their responses about how the evidence they have presented supports or challenges the interpretations. They should also expect to present a balanced argument that both supports and challenges the interpretation.

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