

**GCSE (9-1)**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY B**

## **(SCHOOLS HISTORY PROJECT)**

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**J411**

For first teaching in 2016

**J411/17 Summer 2023 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 responses 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.

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## Paper 17 series overview

Paper J411/17 is a Thematic Study (Migrants to Britain, c.1250-present) with a British Depth Study (The Norman Conquest, 1065-1087). The 2023 summer series saw a return to these composite papers being sat by candidates for the first time since 2019. Centres clearly continue to work hard to prepare their candidates. The ability of candidates to use different techniques, from employing second order historical concepts to organise their responses around, to comparing historical interpretations, was impressive across the range of questions. Areas which continue to require further preparation are the more developed explanations required for Question 3, the ability to effectively explore the purpose of interpretations in Question 7, and the provision of sufficient evidence across a range of factors in the essay questions.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recalled at least one valid response for Question 1</li> <li>• analysed Jewish communities in Medieval Britain by organising their response around a historical concept, most commonly, change in treatment of Jews or reasons for prejudice against them, and supported this with valid historical examples</li> <li>• deployed precise evidence to explain reasons why Commonwealth migrants came to Britain</li> <li>• carefully selected evidence to argue points in Question 4 and 5 that were tied to the specific question</li> <li>• identified and explained one way the interpretation was threatening and intimidating in Question 6 (a)</li> <li>• used a second order concept to develop their own enquiry in Question 6 (b)</li> <li>• compared the differing messages in Interpretations B and C in their portrayal of the Norman Conquest in Question 7, and appreciated how the purpose of one or both affected that portrayal</li> <li>• effectively addressed the quote 'free, equal and democratic' in Question 8 or the main stated and alternative factors in Question 9.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• did not recall a valid response on Question 1</li> <li>• described Jewish communities or remained focused on why they came before the 1250-1290 period, without moving on to look at the period itself</li> <li>• identified reasons for Commonwealth migration but did not support with precise evidence or develop into a full explanation</li> <li>• did not use correctly selected evidence or sufficient evidence to move beyond Level 2 in Questions 4 and 5</li> <li>• did not explain in Question 6 (a) why the feature showed the castle to be threatening and intimidating, or identified two or more ways the interpretation showed this</li> <li>• focused on asking for more details about the interpretation rather than concentrating on a second order concept in Question 6 (b)</li> <li>• compared surface similarities and differences rather than comparing portrayal in Question 7</li> <li>• did not fully engage with the 'free, equal and democratic' quote in Question 8, or did not provide sufficient supporting evidence in either Question 8 or 9 or told a narrative of events in Question 9.</li> </ul>

## Section A overview

Section A is Migrants to Britain, c.1250–present.

To do well on the Thematic Study (Migrants to Britain), candidates need to be able to present a historical summary of an area of content they have learned, offer an explanation in response to a historical question (e.g. explaining the causes of consequences of a historical event), and recall and apply their knowledge to support and challenge a statement in an essay-style question. Many responses displayed a high level of preparation from candidates who selected and deployed accurate knowledge, particularly on Question 2, and to some extent with Questions 4 and 5 (the essay-style questions). With some responses to Question 2, use of a second-order concept to organise the answer was lacking, and this is necessary to access higher levels; while on Question 3, many candidates did not organise material effectively to produce developed explanations.

### Question 1 (a)

#### Migrants to Britain, c.1250 to present

1 (a) Identify **one** positive impact of migrants between 1500 and 1750.

[1]

Candidates found this challenging, with many invalid responses. A specific migrant group was required in order to be able to identify their impact. Responses receiving credit focused on groups such as the Huguenots with specific contributions to silk or clockmaking for example, or the Hansa merchants' impact on trade.

### Question 1 (b)

(b) Identify **one** contribution Italian migrants made to Britain in the late 1800s.

[1]

There were few problems here. Most candidates were able to identify contributions such as ice-cream, road-laying and organ-grinding. Incorrect responses tended to make identifications from other periods, for example referring to medieval Italian bankers.

### Question 1 (c)

(c) Identify the migrant group that the Kindertransport was set up to help.

[1]

Most candidates were able to identify Jewish children, Jews or German Jews here. Some candidates answered 'Germans' which did not effectively tie to the specific migrant group in the question.

## Question 2

- 2 Write a clear and organised summary that analyses Jewish communities in medieval Britain between c.1250 and 1290.

Support your summary with examples.

[9]

Candidates incorporated an impressive range of knowledge about the experience of Jewish people and communities in Medieval Britain. However, the need to organise their response around a second order concept - such as change or causation - eluded some candidates, whose responses remained in Level 1. More successful responses developed two or more points specifically around an organising concept. Occasionally, candidates did not focus specifically on the period in question, 1250-1290, which was characterised by the worsening conditions and ultimate expulsion of the Jews in 1290.

Candidates used second order concepts such as causation, for example, why Jewish communities became victims of persecution, including reasons such as their religion and the view held by many people at the time that the Jewish religion was responsible for Jesus' death. This cause was then supported with examples such as the Lincoln Blood Libel case of 1255, the Statute of Jewry in 1275 and the expulsion edict in 1290.

## Exemplar 1

Large Jewish communities were formed in England during the early medieval period as they had previously been accepted into England to act as money lenders for the King. ~~Since then~~ up to 1290 Jewish communities grew. However they began to face prejudice and anti-Semitism. This could be because of the Crusades war. Lots of Jewish people had to wear star patches to show everyone around them that they were Jewish. This would make Jewish experiences in Britain challenging.

Furthermore Jewish people were also blamed for blood libels. Most famously the Lincoln blood libel where a Jewish person was blamed for extracting the blood from a young boy. The majority of ~~this~~ ~~time~~ the time the young boys were said to be blonde Christians making the allegations harsh on Jewish communities. This ~~again~~ shows us how some Jewish communities had a hard time in England.

The response here shows a succinct two-paragraph response which identifies a change in how Jewish communities were treated (beginning to face prejudice) and goes on to provide two different examples, wearing star patches and the Lincoln Blood Libel. This is a Level 3 response.



## Assessment for learning



This question requires more than just description to advance beyond Level 1. Candidates need to know how to organise an analytical response around a historical concept such as causation, consequence, change, diversity or significance. Before commencing their response, candidates should consider how to organise their response around one or more of these historical concepts, as they are the driver for the response, rather than contextual knowledge. Candidates do not need to use the specific conceptual terms to gain marks, indeed using words such as 'significance' or 'causation' is not a precursor for success on this question.

## Question 3

3 Why did Commonwealth migrants come to Britain after the Second World War?

Explain your answer.

[10]

Candidates were very familiar with some of the content here, particularly the immediate post-war situation which led to the Windrush and the ability of Commonwealth migrants to gain passports to enter Britain and help with post-war rebuilding. The vast majority were able to identify points relating to these events; many referenced the 'Mother Country' or specific problems or push-factors in Commonwealth countries, such as the devastating hurricane in Jamaica, getting them at least Level 2.

Many candidates were rewarded at Level 3, where the previous identification was built upon with either some precise evidence, or an explanatory point linking back to the question (but not both).

To attain Level 4 or Level 5, candidates were required to explain using the identification, precise evidence and an explanatory comment linked to the question. Two explanations of this quality allowed candidates to access Level 5.

Other historical evidence in this question that was rarely used by candidates but may have been creditable included the experiences of Kenyan and Ugandan Asians in the 1960s and 1970s. Candidates tended to remain focused on the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, with the Windrush Generation and the creation of the NHS being the most common examples of specific knowledge.

## Misconception



Some candidates lacked knowledge of the nature of the Commonwealth, writing instead about Jewish refugees, Poles or other groups coming to Britain; the EU was also mentioned by some candidates. Ensuring a basic understanding of the nature and location of the Commonwealth will help students in subsequent examinations.



## Question 4\*

4\* 'Migrants came to Britain in the period 1750 to 1900 because they were driven from their homes.'

How far do you agree?

Give reasons for your answer.

[18]

This question was the more popular of the two essays and was generally well answered, with some good knowledge from candidates on the Irish Potato Famine in particular, along with relevant explanation of the way Russian Jews were driven from their homes in the late nineteenth century. Alternative factors were, on the whole, less well argued. Occasionally candidates found difficulty with the phrase 'driven from their homes', attempting to argue that Lascars and other groups fitted with that reasoning, rather than focusing on the economic or practical nature of their migration.

With a question phrased in this way, it was possible for candidates to argue that a particular group was both 'driven from their home' but also attracted to Britain for other reasons, for example Irish migrants who came to work building the railway network as navvies. There were some impressive examples of candidates doing this.

There were also a significant number of responses incorporating groups from other periods, most notable Huguenots and the Poor Palatines. No credit was possible when discussing these groups.

Less successful responses tended to identify migrant groups but did not provide sufficient support in terms of historical evidence in order to explain the reasoning behind their migration to Britain.

## Question 5\*

5\* 'Migrants to Britain were more welcome in the period **1500–1750** than they were in the period **1300–1500**.'

How far do you agree?

Give reasons for your answer.

[18]

Question 5, with its focus on two different periods, was less popular as a choice for candidates.

The discriminator for access to the highest levels, Levels 5 and 6, was coverage from both periods (rather than addressing both 'welcome' and 'not welcome'). This allowed candidates to focus purely on 'welcome' or indeed 'not welcome' but explore a range of migrant groups across 450 years of British history, in order to reach a judgement about how welcome migrants were and whether attitudes across the periods remained the same, changed or even fluctuated.

Stronger responses covered several migrant groups, most commonly Flemish weavers but also Huguenots, Poor Palatines, Hansa merchants and Jews (returning under Cromwell). Once more with this question it was possible to argue two opposing points for a single migrant group, for example the Poor Palatines' initial positive reception, followed by the swift change to rejection shortly after their arrival in 1709. These responses also managed to cover both 'welcome' and 'not welcome', although there were fewer examples of the former being argued for successfully.

Many candidates deployed knowledge about migrant groups (for example, Flemish weavers' skill with the wool trade, Huguenot contributions in industries such as silk and clockmaking) but were unable to clearly link this to whether they were welcome or not. To achieve this, some reference needed to be made to the nature of their reception by the British people and/or government, or to legislation directed specifically at them, such as the 1530 Egyptian Act against Gypsies, or the Huguenots being given the same legal rights as British-born people in 1708.

A number of candidates wrote about Jewish communities in the medieval period, but as the question asked specifically for 1300 onwards (and Question 2 had already elicited this knowledge), no marks were given for this.

## Section B overview

Section B is The Norman Conquest, 1065-87.

To do well in this Period Study section, candidates needed to be able to identify and explain how producers of interpretations portray historical events, use second order concepts to develop an enquiry (Question 6 (a) and 6 (b)), analyse and compare historical interpretations (Question 7) while recalling and applying their knowledge in a further essay-style question from either Question 8 or 9. Once more, a high level of preparation from candidates was in evidence, alongside a confident handling of source material and willingness to engage in the construction of novel historical enquiries. Candidates drew varied comparisons from the interpretations in Question 7 and some managed to effectively address the portrayal through the purpose of the two interpretations. Where responses were less strong, inability to effectively compare messages in Question 7, or a limited amount of supporting historical evidence in Questions 8 and 9, were the primary ways candidates did not get higher marks.

### Question 6 (a)

#### The Norman Conquest, 1065–1087

- 6 (a) In **Interpretation A**, the image gives the impression that early Norman castles were threatening and intimidating.

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

[3]

Question 6 (a) presents an interpretation of a historical period, character or event and asks candidates to engage with the methods used by the producers of the interpretation.

Most candidates clearly understood the interpretation of an early Norman castle and were able to provide one way in which it was threatening or intimidating, getting a first mark. The further 2 marks were for an explanation of the initial point. Some candidates began with a more general feature – such as the use of light – and specifically developed this to show how the interpretation had a threatening or intimidating feel. The vast majority of candidates, however, chose to focus on specific parts of the interpretation such as the palisade walls, the keep located on the hill, or the presence of armed soldiers.

To gain a third mark, candidates needed to clearly explain how their chosen feature indicated the qualities named in the question. Some candidates provided two or more ways the interpretation does this, but due to the stipulation in the question, no more than one way could be credited.

## Question 6 (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 Norman castles built in England between 1066 and 1087. [5]

The target for candidates in this question was to develop their own historical enquiry from the interpretation they have begun to engage with in the previous question.

Many candidates were able identify a further area of research using second order concepts, most commonly causation (for example, why the castle was built in the way it was) and diversity/typicality (how similar or different were Norman castles compared to this one). An entirely clear explanation of this concept was needed to access Level 3, but a significant number of candidates attained the top of Level 2 (4 marks) by beginning to develop their enquiry.

Candidates remaining in Level 1 tended to focus on an enquiry to find out more details about the interpretation, such as how many soldiers the castle held or details about the materials used in its construction.

### Assessment for learning



This question does not require candidates to respond to their own enquiry. It is expected that candidates will be familiar with the concept of historical enquiry, but there is no requirement that they use particular conceptual words or phrases – indeed it may not work effectively in this question to simply name those words. Instead, focus on the framing of a genuine historical question is more likely to gain marks.

## Question 7

7 Interpretations B and C both focus on the impact of the Norman Conquest on England.

How far do they differ and what might explain any differences?

[12]

This question allows candidates to identify similarities and differences in how historical events or figures have been portrayed in two interpretations, and to explain any differences.

The two interpretations here, both concerning the impact of the Norman Conquest, proved to be accessible to most candidates, with many able to identify points of similarity (such as the significant changes brought about by the conquest) and difference (C's focus on Norman architecture compared to B which centred around what had been lost due to the Normans' arrival). Many candidates were also able to compare the negative portrayal of the conquest in B with the positive one in C, thereby accessing at least 6 marks and, with support from the interpretations, Level 3 (7-9 marks).

The strongest responses managed to explain differences in terms of the purpose of B and/or C. This might have been along the lines of 'Interpretation C is more positive due to it being written by English Heritage. They have a responsibility for managing historic sites, which makes their focus on the architectural impact of the conquest understandable. They talk of the 'spectacular castles and great abbeys' because they would like to increase the number of people visiting their sites'.

There remained however, many responses gaining only Level 1 for undeveloped comments relating to the provenance, often about bias in B or the fact that C is more recent and therefore 'better' as a result due to more evidence being available.

### Assessment for learning



In preparation for future examination series, centres should focus students on developing the skill of identifying the 'core message' of an interpretation and practising the selection of short quotes to illustrate that message. To achieve Level 4 for 'purpose', a consideration of what is specific to the interpretation is needed, along with avoiding generic, stock comments relating to 'bias'.

## Question 8\*

**8\*** In his 2012 article 'The dark side of the Anglo-Saxons', historian Ryan Lavelle argues that late Anglo-Saxon society was 'certainly not free, equal or democratic'.

How far do you agree with this view?

[20]

This was clearly the less popular essay option. However some strong responses contained an impressive level of knowledge, most notably relating to the role played by women in Anglo-Saxon society.

Candidates were able to offer reasoning about the unfairness of social structure to show inequality, the dominance of king and upper echelons of society to illustrate 'undemocratic', and the role of Thralls to challenge notions of freedom. More could have been said in reference to the Witan.

Some candidates attempted to shoehorn religion and Archbishop Stigand into the response, but it was very difficult to tie corrupt church practices to the phrase 'free, equal and democratic' and it was not rewarded.

## Question 9\*

**9\*** The history website BBC Bitesize argues that 'William's victory at Hastings in 1066 owed much to his planning and experience'.

How far do you agree with this view?

[20]

Question 9 was overwhelmingly the more popular option and candidates appeared to enjoy structuring their responses around different reasons for William's victory at Hastings. There was an impressive array of knowledge, with some candidates even successfully referring back to William's earlier battles as Duke in Normandy to illustrate his experience. The most popular points related to William's 'feigned retreat' in the battle, his luck linked to the winds in dictating the time he actually arrived on the coast, and Harold's journey up and down the country to counter Harald Hardrada's invasion.

Candidates used Harold Godwinson's actions and experiences flexibly as either 'luck' for William or 'mistakes' by Harold himself.

Less successful responses did not provide sufficient historical evidence to be credited with developed explanations, or alternatively recounted a narrative of events of the preceding months of 1066, or the battle itself, without tying the 'story' to the question.



## Exemplar 2

However, some argue that William won due to having superior luck. When William was waiting to battle Harold, he had to wait for the wind to change directions so he could travel across the channel. This southerly wind was bringing Harold Godwinson's army from Norway, allowing them to land in York. After just disbanding his army for the harvest, Harold Godwinson had to bring his troops back, march north and defeat the Vikings at Stamford Bridge on September 26<sup>th</sup>. The south coast was now undefended. The wind then changed ~~the~~ direction, allowing William to take the undefended south, landing in reverse on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September. This meant William could get supplies, like horses, and rest his men, whilst Harold's army was extremely tired. The changing weather conditions was a way in which luck contributed to William's victory.

This candidate has written an explanatory paragraph on the factor of 'luck', cleverly weaving in the effect of the wind with its consequences on Harold's actions, William's ability to rest and prepare, and Harold's army's tiredness before making a clear link back to the question.



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