

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y321/01 Summer 2024 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.

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Paper Y321/01 series overview

Y321 is one of twenty-one units for Paper 3 of the A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of at least one hundred years through an interpretation question on a named in-depth topic and through 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.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<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

There is one compulsory question in this section. This question requires candidates 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.

Section A in Paper Y321 is focused on the achievements of Nasser's social and economic policies.

Question 1

1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages.

Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the achievements of Nasser's social and economic policies. [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 to assess three viewpoints presented per interpretation. They explained that Interpretation A argues that Nasser's social and economic policies were successful whereas B argue that he experienced some failures.

The most successful answers dealt with each interpretation in turn before coming to a measured conclusion. Answers which attempted a thematic approach were often confused and lacked evaluation, leading to an essay-like approach. Some candidates are still listing the relative points that each interpretation makes before testing with own knowledge. This often led to candidates not completing answers.

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 should not be evaluating what is not there, but instead focusing on the actual views presented and testing them against historical knowledge.

Centres should also be aware that there is no requirement to mention other historians, nor indeed to evaluate their provenance.

Exemplar 1

1	<p>It is The successes of Nasser's social and economic policies is largely debated: as passage A reflects his widely recognised successes such as 'substantial progress in industrialisation' which was made possible by nationalisation of the Suez canal whereas passage B emphasises a greater focus upon the Nasser's failures and shortcomings of his temporary successes such as his ^{failed} attempt at bringing introducing an ideological change of Nasserism. While both interpretations depict valid arguments, passage A is more accurate because Nasser's leadership within Egypt transcended the borders and ultimately affected the entirety of the Middle East such as Syria who wished to become united with Egypt because of his successful social and economic policies.</p> <p>As passage A states, Egypt made 'substantial progress in industrialisation'. This is accurate because throughout Nasser's leadership, Egypt made several advances with their industries. For example, the nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1956 allowed Egypt to create the funds for the building of the Aswan Dam which USA and Britain refused to pay for. This allowed for Egypt to be economically independent from Great Britain and granted them a greater level of autonomy within</p>
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the Middle East. This reflects the remarkable success of Nasser's economic policies because unlike other states such as Trans-Jordan, their economy and development could not be limited by the influence of Great Powers. This is further highlighted by the Great Powers such as US and Britain as they were cautious and concerned about Nasser's successful leadership and Egypt's 'substantial progress in industrialisation'. Passage A is further correct to argue that Nasser's 'land reform areas were highly successful'. Before the 1952 military coup in which Nasser gained his power, nobles within Egypt owned $\frac{1}{3}$ of all land while all other classes around 0.2%. During his leadership, Nasser redistributed this land more equally thus making him more favourable in the eyes of the lower classes. While this is broadly an example of an economic policy, this also had an impact on social aspects as through this, Nasser ensured the support of most population of Egypt which further ~~built~~^{ensured} up his ruling. Thus, Passage A effectively highlights the achievements of Nasser's economic and social policies as he did not only increase the power and influence of Egypt within the Middle East but also secure his rule and popularity within his own borders.

However, passage A is incorrect with its argument that Nasser was successful through the 'elimination of foreign dominance'. This is because as passage B effectively depicts, Nasser's policy of brinkmanship led to his failures and if anything, he had allowed for foreign power such as Syria^{to} grow within the Middle East.

As passage B states, Nasser's 'failure to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict' reveals the shortcomings of his social and economic policies. This is accurate because violence escalating against Israel by Egypt, Syria and Jordan led to the six day war (1967) in which Israel became the victor.

Through for example, through his policy of brinkmanship, Nasser was inclined to showcase his strength and dominance within the Middle East through the 1967 military parade. This demonstration of economic and military strength had led to an increase of tension between Israel and other states as they felt threatened by the magnitude of violent attacks and displays of power by Nasser. Furthermore his decision to move 100,000 soldiers into the Sinai which borders Israel worsened this tension thus leading to the six day war in which Nasser arguably ruined his dominance within the Middle East and worsened

the Arab-Israeli conflict thus revealing that Nasser's economic and social policies' achievements were temporary because of his own decisions. Passage B is further valid to state that Nasser's 'attempt at ideological change' was limited to the very word 'attempt.' While his popularity with the Cairo radio which broadcasted to the whole of Middle East allowed for him to spread his idea of 'Nasserism', he ultimately was limited to the idea of Arab nationalism in that which was united upon the opposition of Great powers and Israel, not the leadership of Nasser. ~~But~~ Arguably this was an example of some ideological attempt yet not defined by him. However, passage B is invalid to assert that Nasser just 'flirted with socialism'. While he did not embrace this idea solely, it was evident to be in his policies. The ideas of secularism, distribution of land and nationalisation are key fundamental aspects of socialism which Nasser introduced within Egypt. Furthermore his close allegiance with socialist states such as China (recognising their communist state in 1955) or the USSR (Czech arms deal of 1955 in which Egyptian rice and cotton was traded for weaponry) showed this forth further. While it can be agreed as passage B does that Nasser didn't commit to it fully and only likened the idea for its opposition of the west,

he nevertheless reflects this throughout his leadership within Egypt - his economic and social policies.

Therefore, unlike passage A, Nasser's failures are more greatly portrayed within the other interpretation. However while evidently most of Nasser's social and economic policies faced some shortcomings, passage A is more accurate with its assertion about the achievements of Nasser's social and economic policies. This is because passage B almost undermines the scale of Nasser's success as a leader within Egypt and the Middle East as a whole. He was successful with what he tried to achieve within Egypt which was its economic independence from Great powers such as the US which other states within the region have failed to do such as the Moroccan coup 1953. Thus, passage A is more valid because they capture the essence of Nasser's achievements and the extent to which they went to than just his shortcomings.

This candidate response was marked in Level 6 and contains excellent knowledge and evaluation. It has sustained judgements at the end of each paragraph and an excellent conclusion.

Section B overview

Candidates are required to answer two questions from a choice of three. To do well on Section B candidates need to make connections and links across the whole period of their study. They should explain similarities and differences between the events they are discussing to show an awareness of continuity and change across the whole period, unless instructed otherwise. The comparisons may be made across the period within the topic or between regions, depending on the topic. It is also important that the comparisons are explained - what is similar or different between the periods or regions.

The strongest answers will test a hypothesis and reach a supported judgement.

Question 2*

- 2*** To what extent did the aims of the Great Powers in the Middle East change in the period from 1908 to 2011? [25]

This was a popular question which elicited a wide range of responses. Candidates were able to focus on thematic paragraphs that were related to the aims of the great powers. Some also dealt with the question by Great Power, comparing across time period. At the top end, candidates assessed three or four relevant examples/time periods/great powers within each paragraph, evaluating the extent to which there was change. They came to interim judgements as to why there was change before coming to a developed conclusion which contained a clear answer to the question.

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

A - chronologically

or

B – were unable to compare examples within thematic paragraphs.

The latter was common, when candidates realised they had to write thematically, but then listed examples without comparing why or how there was change.

Assessment for learning



Successful responses grouped two examples that showed change across time, and two examples that did not. This was often using the word 'similarly' to signpost and then explaining the level that they changed the theme of the paragraph and why. They came to an interim judgement assessing why the changes were similar. Weaker answers did not develop the response and simply used the word 'similarly' without describing why they were similar.

Exemplar 2

2.		<p>The aims of the Great Powers in the Middle East have changed drastically overtime. This can be seen in their involvements, especially of the USA, Great Britain, and France, in conflict in the Middle East, the economy, and the peace process. The aims of the Great Powers have changed in these areas due to the fluctuation of their influence, but it has had the most changes in their approaches to peace forging peace in the Middle East.</p> <p>At In terms of conflict, the aims of the Great Powers have changed due to their influence and involvement in the region. At the the beginning of the period it is Britain and France that are most involved in the Middle East due to their control over mandates. In the 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement it was agreed that upon the dissolution of the Ottoman empire, Britain and France would get portions of the land to have as mandates, with France getting Syria and</p>
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		<p>Lebanon and Britain getting Iraq, Palestine, and Transjordan. This meant that the the countries were quite involved in the Middle East through their as puppet governments, control of their foreign policy and the violent suppression of rebellions, such as Britain in the 1936 Arab revolt in Palestine. This changed over time as after the creation of Israel, ^{in 1948} almost all of their mandates had gained independence. Especially after the 1956 Suez Crisis, Britain and France were condemned for the Sèvres protocol that was carried out without UN permission. Therefore, Britain and France's roles were different after the 1950s 1950s, being scarcely involved in any conflict. The USA also was different to this because they emerged after the Suez crisis, publicly condemning Britain and France for their actions and becoming the Superpower. They were mainly involved in conflict in order to Their roles changed over time as were during the up to the the 1980s they were focused on supporting Israel and preventing the spread of communism because of the Cold War, whereas after the Cold War they focused more on personal interests in the region, such as oil. A drastic change in their</p>
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aims can be seen in ~~that~~ their support for Iraq in the 1980-8 Iran-Iraq war, and then their different ~~support for~~ anti-Iraq approach in the ~~the~~ 1990-1 Gulf war, mainly because Bush started seeing Hussein as a threat both because of his extreme anti-west approach and because of his exploitation of weaker countries like Kuwait. Therefore, political and military aims changed during 1908-2011 because of the switch in power halfway through the period.

The aims of the great powers changed greatly in relation to economic aims. At the beginning of the period, Britain and France were invested in Egypt, with ~~the~~ it being a British protectorate, due to their control of the Suez canal. Since Nasser nationalised the Suez in ~~the~~ 1956, ~~that~~ and they were unable to get it back, the aims of Britain and France changed, with Britain focusing more on oil and France just having less involvement in the Middle East as a whole. Similarly, ~~the~~ aims in oil for the US and Britain specifically changed over time because it was ~~there~~ also that their influence greatly decreased due to the rise of Pan-Arabism. Whereas at the beginning

of the period the seven sisters (Britain, USA, Netherlands) dominated oil production in the Middle East, after they drastically lowered prices and cost Middle Eastern companies billions, their control decreased. This was due to the formation of OPEC, as an Arab controlled company in 1960. Also, over time, oil ~~increasing~~ ^{was increasingly} ~~used~~ ^{or bargaining tool} used as a weapon, especially seen through the 1973 oil embargo, as in response to the US arms deal with Israel in 1973, which led Saudi Arabia to join the OPEC in the embargo and prices of oil quadrupled. Therefore, Great power aims changed over time as their decreasing dominance in the oil industry made countries, like USA, ~~change~~ ^{alter} their foreign policy ~~and they~~ as they began to prioritise oil and the economy in the ~~late~~ 1970s.

~~Great~~ Finally, Great Power aims changed drastically from ~~the~~ 1908-2011 in the peace process, especially because the situation got a lot worse over time. Whereas at the beginning of the period Britain tried to take a more ~~to~~ balanced approach,

with Herbert Samuel suggesting the setting up of an equal legislative council in Palestine in 1932, Britain's role in the peace process was basically nonexistent at the end of the period, instead choosing to aid the USA in their plan to invade Iraq in 2003, without UN approval. USA's motives also changed throughout the period. Throughout most of the conflict, the US had taken quite a pro-Israeli approach, even giving them a \$2.2 billion arms package during the 1973 war, and this was mainly due to their proxy wars with the Soviet Union and their aims of controlling the spread of communism. However, this changed after the ~~the~~ end of the cold war in ~~the~~ 1991, and they became invested in the peace process, ^{helping} setting up the Madrid Conference in 1992 and Oslo Accords in 1993 and 1995 with the goal of finding a solution to the Palestinian issue. Although none of it was massively successful, it was a big change in direction for the USA.

In conclusion, the aims of Great

		Powers changed greatly in their approach to the peace process mostly, but they always aimed to be economically and militarily involved in the Middle East, although in different ways. Therefore, their aims also changed to a medium extent, changing in technique but the fundamental beliefs staying similar throughout.
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This candidate response was marked at the top of Level 5. There is clear comparison and evaluation of the aims of the Great Powers. There are also good end of paragraph judgements and a conclusion, but these could be more developed. The interim judgements at the end of each paragraph should address the theme of the paragraph and state, for example, the extent of change in oil as an aim and why this has happened. The conclusion would benefit from mentioning the wider context surrounding the answer and being specific. This conclusion is quite generic, for example where it says 'although in different ways', the candidate could mention those ways and state why. The response also requires greater consistency in the explanation as to why the examples given show change.

Question 3*

3* To what extent did the reasons to find a solution to the Palestinian issue change in the period from 1908 to 2011?

[25]

This was a popular question which elicited a wide range of responses. Candidates were able to focus on thematic paragraphs that were related to the reasons behind a solution. At the top end, candidates assessed three or four relevant examples/time periods within each paragraph, evaluating the extent to which there was change. If the candidate answered by theme it was generally using land, western focus, Pan-Arabism or resources. They came to interim judgements as to why there was change before coming to a developed conclusion which contained a clear answer to the question.

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

A - chronologically

or

B – were unable to compare examples within thematic paragraphs.

The latter was common, when candidates realised they had to write thematically, but then listed examples without comparing why or how there was change.

Exemplar 3

3.		<p>the reasons to find a solution to the Palestinian issue changed over time to a medium extent. Although over time there were more problems that arose from the Palestinian issue, such as political Islam, and issues with Western involvement, the fundamental Palestinian issue of land remained the same and it was what fuelled most of the conflict.</p> <p>land was the underlying cause for all Arab-Israeli conflict from 1908-2011. This began with the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948 officially, although there were already issues with Jewish immigration before that, forcing the</p>
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		<p> British to have to put in place 3 white papers limiting Jewish immigration to Palestine. This conflict is still ongoing, but fighting in Gaza in 2008 was one of the the latest in the period. Despite the huge time difference, both the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and the Gaza fighting in 2008 were caused by issues with Israeli occupation of Palestinian land. There was also constant conflict between ^{however,} the first Arab-Israeli war resulted in the Israelis increasing their land by 21% and the 2008 Gaza fighting resulted in the Israelis remaining in control of Gaza. This constant issue over land has been the reason motivating finding a solution to the Palestinian issue, both through both ^{early} 1990s Camp David Accords and 1994 Cairo agreement attempting to at least put a stop to settlement building. However, the divide over land is what prevents these solutions solutions from working as the both the Palestinians and the Israelis believe the land is fully theirs and they have been unwilling to compromise. This shows how reasons to find a solution to the Palestinian issue </p>
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3.		haven't changed over time, instead change because of constant conflict over land.
		Another reason Reasons to find a solution to the Palestinian issue have also changed because of the an increasing popularity of pan-Arabism and later the shift to political Islam. Pan-Arabism caused set also led to a lot of an conflict over land because it promoted Arab unity and strength, especially in the face of Israel. This was what led to Egypt and Syria into the 6-day war of 1967, which was an Arab humiliation; similar to

		<p>the 1948 war, the Israelis managed to take over a lot of land, namely the West Bank, Gaza, the the Sinai, and Golan Heights. This huge defeat led to a decrease in pan-Arabism but an increase in political Islam. This was seen through the resurgence of groups like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the 1970s and the decreased influence of pan-Arab Baathists in Iraq and Syria as specific people took over - Saddam Hussein and Bashar Al-Assad. They with political Islam also cause the they were both similar in that they ^{ion of} promoted anti-secularism, the instead wanting Islamic law to be implemented into political bodies and policies. This was seen in the 1979 Iranian revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini, which overthrew the monarchy and established an Islamic Republic. Similarly, extremist organisations promoting this arose after the revolution, with HAMAS, Hezbollah, and Al-Qaeda all opposing the peace process, wanting a united Arab state, and being founded in the 1980s. This rise in extremist ideologies and groups was they find became a key motivator for a finding a p solution to the Palestinian issue, and so the motivations</p>
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shifted from a focus on land to a focus on the violence of extremist groups, both in the Middle East and internationally.

Finally, the reasons to find a solution to the Palestinian issue changed because of attitudes to Western involvement.

~~Whereas at the~~ Even though at the beginning of the period under the mandate system, the West weren't very popular in the Middle East, this unpopularity turned to hatred in 1948 after the UN partition plan. This growing anti-Western sentiment in the Middle East was a ~~reason~~ motivator for finding a solution because as it grew, it became harder to get Arab countries to cooperate, especially as the USA continued their support and aid to Israel. The first ~~part~~ of anti-Western sentiment was expressed mostly through a wave of nationalisations. In a similar way, ~~Egypt~~ Nasser nationalised the Suez canal, Mossadegh nationalised oil in Iran (1952) and the Baathists nationalised oil in Iraq (1972). Oil was also used as a bargaining tool in the 1973 embargo in the midst of the war ~~between~~ in order to stop USA's support of Israel.

		It was this opposition to Western involvement
		that could be became was because a
		reason for finding a solution,
		especially in 1973 when it began to
		affect the world economy.
		Overall, reasons for finding a solution
		to find Palestinian issue changed
		over time to a medium extent due
		to a rise in extremism and anti-Western
		sentiment, but land issues always
		remained an issue.

This candidate response was marked in Level 6. There is clear comparison and evaluation of why the solutions changed to the Palestinian issue. This is exemplified, for example, in the final paragraph where the nationalisation of oil is compared across Iran and Iraq. The conclusion could be developed further.

Question 4*

- 4* 'Christian communities were the most important cause of religious tensions in the Middle East in the period from 1908 to 2011.'

How far do you agree?

[25]

This was the least popular question on the paper. Most candidates who approached it dealt with Christian communities first, before exploring other religious groups. There were few answers at the top end. These responses compared religious tension across time and the role each community played in it, utilising the groups as the themed paragraphs.

The vast majority of answers listed the groups and did not compare either between group or time period, meaning that they could not access the top levels.

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