

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y318/01 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 Y318/01 series overview

Y318 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 Y318 is focused on Khrushchev's fall from power.

Question 1

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

Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the reasons for Khrushchev's fall from power. [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 Khrushchev fell from power due to domestic reasons, whereas Interpretation B argues that foreign policy was more important.

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>Interpretation A and interpretation B present conflicting views of the reasons for Khrushchev's fall from power. Best in B presents a more outward looking reason for Khrushchev's fall from power, due to his worsening relationships with the west and desire to accelerate the Soviet nuclear build up. Downey, on the other hand, presents a more convincing argument that focusses on domestic issues seeing the reason for Khrushchev's fall from power as his attempts to de-stabilise the country were greatly opposed.</p> <p>Best in interpretation B presents the view that 'the Soviet-American relationship had begun to sour once again' which is strongly supported given the fact that the Gary Powers U2 plane being shot down, trapping Eisenhower, was a propaganda win for Russia, at the expense of the US reputation. This sourness can also be seen when JFK refused to accept Khrushchev's 5000000000 ultimatum to withdraw the US troops out of Berlin. The view that 'Khrushchev seized the opportunity to alter the delicate balance in Europe on the Soviet Union's favour', can also be supported to some extent given the fact</p>
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that he sent tanks into Hungary following the Hungarian Uprising 1956, killing 2,000 Hungarians and causing 200,000 to flee, evident of this powerful move being on Soviet Union's favour at the expense of his relationship with Europe. The view can also be supported by the construction of the Berlin Wall, preventing further brain drain of 2.7 million and thus preventing further embarrassment, this being on the Soviet Union's favour. However, this argument is linked by the fact that following the crushing of the Hungarian uprising, this created a 'poor advertisement' for communism and was publicly condemned by the UN. Similarly, the Berlin wall worsened relations with the West, evident by their drive performance on the arms race as the US had x20 more nuclear weapons and therefore was not at all on the Soviet Union's favour as Best stated. Although Best is accurate in pointing out 'the Cuban missile crisis resulted on an apparent Soviet defeat and American victory', given the fact that Khrushchev withdrew his missiles and therefore looked as though he was backing down, this argument is severely undermined by JFK's private actions. The fact

that JFK removed US missiles from Turkey and promised not to invade Cuba shows that Khrushchev was in fact able to test his diplomatic skills, making it not a total 'Soviet defeat'. Furthermore, the development of the nuclear hotline following the Cuban missile crisis further undermines Best's argument as it shows Khrushchev's aim of peaceful co-existence did not completely fail. Overall, whilst Best is accurate on pointing out a sour ~~was~~ Soviet-American relationship being a reason for Khrushchev's fall from power, the argument is undermined by Best overlooking what Khrushchev achieved more behind the ~~scenes~~ scenes and thus was not a total failure.

In contrast to interpretation B, interpretation A presents a more outward looking view as to why Khrushchev fell from power.

Downey's argument 'his powers split the communist world', is strongly contradicted by the fact his aim of 'peaceful co-existence' was seen as a U-turn to the Chinese, who believed Khrushchev was 'too soft in imperialism'. This then led to the Sino-Soviet split in which Khrushchev later refused to give military aid to China in

		1960 to deal with famine, greatly supporting Downey's view. The view that Khrushchev 'wanted to improve the standard of living of the ordinary people', is accurate to some extent given the fact that by the 7 th 5YP consumer goods had increased by 60% and by 1958, 50% had access to TVs and 10% to a vacuum. However, this argument is limited given the fact that car production only reached 1 million between 1952-55 and road works remained poor with the 1600km from Moscow to Crimea only having 13 petrol stations. Downey's most convincing argument is that Khrushchev's drive to increase food production was 'successful initially, but it was quite unscientific'. This is clearly supported by the fact that 1.8 million hectares of grain were produced by 1960 and the virgin lands made up 51-81% of grain harvested by 1956 via the virgin land scheme. The 'quite unscientific' view is further corroborated by the fact that the scheme was poorly managed with the crops being unsuitable for the climate and there not being enough fertilizer. 20 million tonnes of maize ended up having to be imported from the US and Australia in 1963, evident of Downey's view being
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most accurate. Overall, whilst Downey may be overly positive in regard to Khrushchev wanting to improve the standard of living for the ordinary people, he is most accurate on what his policies of both peaceful co-existence and de-stalinisation split the communist world as well as the ultimate failure of agricultural production being the reason for Khrushchev's downfall.

Ultimately, whilst interpretation B is accurate regarding worsening relations with the west, it is undermined by the success of Khrushchev behind the scenes. Although the Sino-American relationship was certainly sour at times, Best fails to acknowledge and recognise that it was not a period of total failure for Khrushchev and thus his outward looking argument is greatly undermined. Downey on passage 14 presents a much more convincing argument as although it may be overly positive in regard to Khrushchev's intentions to improve the standard of living, it accurately points out that Khrushchev's domestic and foreign ideology of de-stalinisation was the reason for Khrushchev's downfall. Downey's argument regarding the failure of the virgin land

		scheme epitomises the 'great endless
		embarrassment' felt by his critics and
		thus it is interpretation A that is the
		most convincing view of the reasons
		for Hitler's fall from power.

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* 'There was very little political change in Russia.'

How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1855 to 1964?

[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 ideology, government structure, local government, and repression, generally focusing on three of these four. At the top end, candidates assessed three or four rulers within each paragraph, evaluating the extent to which there was change. They came to interim judgements as to why rulers did or did not instigate 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 rulers within thematic paragraphs.

The latter was common, when candidates realised they had to write thematically, but then listed some/all of the rulers without comparing why or how they brought about political change.

Finally, some candidates wrote about economic change which was not the focus of the question. This generally manifested itself when writing about the emancipation of the serfs as an ideological change or, in some cases, the NEP. Neither of these were rewardable.

Assessment for learning



Successful responses grouped two rulers that did not change Russian politics and two that did. 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 then came to an interim judgement assessing why the two rulers were similar (for example driven by the need to preserve their regime. Answers that were less strong did not develop the responses and simply used the word 'similarly' without describing why they were similar.

Exemplar 2

2. During the period 1855 to 1964 there was a significant political change: the shift from autocracy to dictatorship, tsarism to communism. However, while many of the changes seemed drastic, many of the changes were actually a form of continuity in themselves, as ~~white Russian~~ repression was always used, only just now is less frequent. At the heart of the Russian State there was always one person in charge and the nature of government was ~~for~~ centralised. There were definitely large surface level changes in the Russian

in the period 1855 to 1961, but these were mostly in appearance only, as the ideology, nature of government and repression remained somewhat consistent.

In regards to Ideology, there appears to be the most change, but in reality it stayed fairly consistent, only different in name. While Alexander II started his reign with a series of reforms, he soon tightened his grip on autocracy, in 1866 ending his series of reforms. Alexander III can be said to be the most autocratic of all tsars, and had a firm grip over the country. Like Alexander II, Nicholas II also made some reforms, like ~~land~~ land reforms in 1906-7, but similarly to his predecessor these reforms were never intended to dilute autocracy, rather stave off opposition to maintain it. Similarly, Lenin's switch to war communism to his NEP, which is not the most ideologically sound decision, as the NEP allied more with the Capitalist West however, like both Alexander II and Nicholas II he did it for the purposes of appeasing opposition and maintaining power. Stalin's ~~totalitarian~~ totalitarian communist ideas were so similar to tsarism he was sometimes regarded as the "red tsar". While ~~Anton~~ At the heart of things, Autocratic tsarism and the way

in which the communist state were run were similar, with a supreme leader at the top. While the transition from tsarism to Communism can be labeled as political change when looking at the ideologies of the leaders there is far more continuity than change.

In regards to the nature of government, there was slightly more political change however there were still large elements of continuity. As part of his series of reforms Alexander II introduced zemstvo local governments, in 1864, which decentralised government slightly in reaction to the Crimean War. Alexander III rejected this however, and restricted the zemstvos. Similarly to Alexander II, after the disastrous Russo-Japanese war and the revolution of 1905, Nicholas II introduced dumas; but like his father restricted these government bodies as much as he was able with the Fundamental Law in 1906. One of the most seismic changes to the nature of government was the establishment of the provisional government, ^{in February 1917} ending centuries of tsarism and adding a slight element of democracy with the dual power / power being split with the Duma. However this was short lived with some months later in October 1917 the Bolsheviks were established under Lenin, and the centralised control of the state and for all governing bodies

answerable to one leader being seen as a
 legitimisation to Tsarism (and therefore a
 change from the previous government, but
 also in some regard a change to the remnants
 of the old order). Like Stalin, like Alexander III,
 wanted to crack down on the nature of government
 to tighten his grip on the state. Stalin arrested
 11,000 political opponents in his ^{party} government during
 the purges of the 1930's, which in some way
 is like Alexander III's decision to restrict the
 Zemstvos, as both leaders were securing their
 own rule. As part of his destabilisation, Khrushchev,
 like Alexander II, tried to make bureaucracy less
 centralised and more representative to a certain
 degree. However, Khrushchev also eliminated political
 opponents Beria and Malenkov from his government
 to secure his own leadership and government,
 suggesting there was less of a change than perceived
 from Stalin's nature of government to Khrushchev.
 All in all, disregarding the few months of
~~change~~ that the previous government,
 there was far less political change in the nature
 of the governments themselves. Of course, the previous
 government has such a large change, but given
 the how short lived it was the change didn't
 have such a long lasting impact.

Finally, there was very little political change in the way that R. repression was consistently used to suppress opposition and to maintain leadership. All with the exception of the provisional government, who was the only governing body who did not have a secret police. They did not even have full control over the army due to a revolution, so dealt with opposition by reforming it with their decree on land. However, this impact can be said to have led to their downfall. Henceforth the change was fairly insignificant due to how short lived it was. Alexander the II turned to repression after the 1st attempt on his life in 1881 and most notably tried to suppress his political opponents in 1887. After watching the assassination of his father, Alexander III was immediately repressive, suppressing censorship by closing 16 publications and removing 300 book titles after his father had previously eased it. He also implemented land capitulation in 1889 for further repression. Following the provisional government, Lenin's rule marked a shift back to repression when he reintroduced the secret police. Stalin furthered this, by sending millions to gulags. Somewhat following Alexander the 3rd's more heavily repressive model of terror and deporting millions of kulaks, simply for being "class enemies". Khrushchev's "dan

		<p>meant that he - tried to be as repressive, which was easier in his time given there was less peasant unrest. However, when needed he used extreme repression, like in 1956 with the Hungarian uprising, showing he could be just as brutal and repressive as Stalin. There was more continuity than change in regard to repression, as all leaders used it to maintain their authority (with the exception of the provisional government, but their authority only lasted a few months without).</p> <p>In Conclusion, there was very little meaningful change in Russia from 1855 to 1964. Government always stayed under the firm grip of the lead, even if the organs were given different names. Their ideologies at its core resulted in one supreme being, and Repression was intertwined into each successful regime. There was far more public continuity than there was change.</p>
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This candidate response was marked in Level 6. There is clear comparison and evaluation across the time period, explaining the extent of change. This is shown, for example, in the structure paragraph where the candidate analyses the zemstva and the duma and then returns to this comparison when assessing Stalin. There are also good end of paragraph judgements and a conclusion; though this could be developed further.

Question 3*

3* 'The Five Year Plans had a far greater impact on the lives of industrial workers than any other economic policies.'

How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1855 to 1964?

[25]

This was a popular question. Candidates were able to focus on thematic paragraphs that were related to lives of industrial workers. They had the freedom to define this as they wished. Many focused on living conditions, working conditions and access to food/famine. Others, equally successfully, address the themes of political, economic, and social.

At the top end, candidates used the Five Year Plans at the start of each paragraph before comparing it to two other economic policies (in each paragraph). Successful answers were able to compare throughout the paragraph (FYPs had a greater impact than 'X' because, whilst 'X' achieved this, the FYPs impacted...) and then concluded at the end of the paragraph which economic policy brought the greatest change. The best conclusions assessed each theme in turn to reach a sustained judgement.

At the lower end of the mark range, candidates wrote about three economic policies in total, either chronologically in themes or as factors. Some candidates did not write about economic policies explicitly, which limited their mark range.

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 which economic policy impacted the lives of the industrial workers the most. Candidates should be encouraged, therefore, to come to a sustained judgement about the impact of the policy in the question in relation to others; not whether it was similar to them. This was, again, similar to last year's series. Finally, candidates who did not cover the whole time period were not able to reach the higher levels.

Exemplar 3

B	3	The Five-year plans under Stalin's reign were arguably the most impactful economic policy faced by industrial workers in urban areas.
		Although the urban workers suffered significantly under all leaders, Stalin was the most impactful

from a negative perspective, leading to discontent in terms of living, working conditions and famine and food availability.

In terms of living conditions, Stalin's 5 year plans were ~~seen~~ arguably the most impactful on the lives of urban workers. The 5 year plans were carried out under immense pressure from Stalin with limited room in cities due to the entire work force being forced to be put behind industrialisation. Thus living conditions consisted of mainly Communist high rise tenements, with 1930 statistics showing 25% of Moscow to have been living in one room housing, often with their entire families. This was significant due to sheer lack of space and unsanitary conditions, which were arguably also true under Alexander N's mismanagement of the economy, causing a similar influx of people to cities. ~~The~~ Nicholas II could be argued to have more significant living conditions under industrialisation through Witte's Great Spurt, with 100,000 people ~~dying~~ dying of cholera in St Petersburg in 1910. However, compared to Stalin, this was arguably less significant as it was more short-term, met with solution by the government in just a years time, introduced the sewage system to combat poor hygiene in 1911. ~~It~~ It could be argued that living conditions under Khrushchev

were more significant in terms of positive impact, with the introduction of housing meaning a new availability of privacy and clothing the housing market in 1956. This was major change from Stalin's 5.8m² living space in 1934, but however could be argued to be less impactful as it showed a continuation from Stalin's lack of consumer goods and poor goods or quality of living, the housing being cheaply, poorly built, along with only 12% having refrigerators, suggests merely a continuation of the most significant shift of living conditions under Stalin's five year plans.

Working conditions were similarly arguably the most affected by Stalin's 8 year plans for industrial workers, proving consistently poor to the extent never before seen. Stalin upped the average working day to 10 to 12 hours on average, with the 8 year plans putting in place ~~these~~ ^{these} quotas that were said to be necessary in reaching targets set by Stalin for intense industrial growth. Gigantomania projects like Magnitogorsk took a newly unprecedented scale of industrialisation, with little regard being given to workers' health, being undertrained and uneducated to do such intense ~~mechanical~~ work. This could be compared to another factor of Alexander II's proto-management under Reform, the working conditions being never experienced before as industrialisation was still in its

infancy. This meant poor conditions as there was no formal inspectorate even introduced before 1882. ~~Also~~ However, this is arguably less significant due to this ~~the~~ reason, industrialisation starting from a near non-existent base, with many still working primarily in agriculture, whereas under Stalin, this was impacting the majority of industrial workers, ~~making~~ making up a much larger scope of people. This could be said to be less impactful than working conditions under Nicholas, being more positive with the 1903 workers insurance system, making increased positive change for workers in terms of security. This is similarly comparable to the extension of increased pensions and workers rights under Khrushchev's economic policy of ~~the~~ further 5 year plans, however this was arguably not as impactful as Stalin's previous working conditions based around his own 5 year plans, ~~making~~ with this being a minor change in comparison again to the huge scale of discontent caused by Stalin. Thus, in terms of working conditions, Stalin's 5 year plans resulted in the worst conditions for working, effects a huge number of people to an unprecedented extent.

The availability of food and famine was a key issue for workers throughout the period, though the worst case famine is arguably caused by Stalin's five

		<p> year plans, these encompassing collectivisation as an accompanying policy that was enforced alongside them to keep up quotas and grain production. The pressure of the 5 year plans resulted led to the focus being entirely pulled away from agricultural work, with industry being the main government focus. Thus, collectivisation was the dominant agricultural policy, that resulted in mass deprivation for workers in terms of food consumption. In Moscow, between 1928 and 33 consumption of meat, fruit and vegetables fell by 2/3s, creating mass famine that was hugely significant. This could be argued to be less impactful when compared to other Communist famines such as 1921, Lenin's </p>
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Question 4*

4* Assess the view that Russia was consistently able to control its nationalities and satellite states in the period from 1855 to 1964. **[25]**

This essay produced the fewest responses from candidates but there were a wide range of marks. Candidates were able to focus on thematic paragraphs that were related to control, in the most part focusing on political, economic, and social control but, in some cases, using the tools of repression and Russification. A final popular approach was to assess by country/region. If candidates were able to compare across time period they were able to achieve the marks for synthesis, but these were few and far between.

At the top end, candidates assessed three or four rulers within each paragraph, evaluating the extent to which they were able to control the nationalities. They came to interim judgements as to why rulers did or did not have control 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 rulers within thematic paragraphs.

The latter was common, when candidates realised they had to write thematically, but then listed some/all of the rulers without comparing why or how they were able to control the nationalities.

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