

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY A**

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**H505**

For first teaching in 2015

**Y317/01 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 Y317/01 series overview

Y317 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"> <li>showed a clear understanding of the views of the two interpretations in relation to the question</li> <li>were able to use contextual knowledge to test the interpretations, linking that knowledge directly to the interpretation through evaluative words</li> <li>were able to consider both the strengths and limitations of both Interpretations using contextual knowledge</li> <li>in answering the essay questions, covered the whole period in a balanced way</li> <li>adopted a thematic approach</li> <li>made links and comparisons between aspects of the topic</li> <li>explained the links and comparisons</li> <li>supported their arguments with precise and relevant examples</li> <li>reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question</li> <li>demonstrated an understanding and familiarity with the different command verbs e.g. identify, describe, explain, and discuss.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>showed a limited understanding of one or both of the interpretations</li> <li>did not go beyond a basic explanation of part of the interpretation</li> <li>did not link any contextual knowledge directly to the interpretation and therefore did not evaluate the interpretation</li> <li>in answering the essay adopted a chronological rather than thematic approach</li> <li>did not make links or comparisons even if events from different parts of the period were discussed in the same paragraph</li> <li>did not cover the whole period</li> <li>did not focus on the precise wording of the question</li> <li>made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.</li> </ul>



## 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 Y317 is focused on the consequences of the Boxer Uprising.

### Question 1

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

Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the consequences of the Boxer Uprising. [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 the Boxer uprising had a serious impact on the Manchu dynasty, whereas Interpretation B argues that the impact was widely felt on the local population.

The most successful responses dealt with each interpretation in turn before coming to a measured conclusion. Responses 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. Responses 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>Although Interpretation B's emphasis on China's alienation and humiliation by the West and Japan is a fairly convincing explanation of the consequences of the Boxer Rebellion, Interpretation A's emphasis on the domestic issues faced by the Manchu government is a more convincing explanation for the consequences of the Boxer Rebellion.</p> <p>Interpretation B is quite convincing when discussing the consequences of the foreign troops entering Beijing, but less convincing when explaining China's changing international status as a result of the Boxer Rebellion. The interpretation claims that 'the ordinary people of Beijing... felt the fury of the invasion', rather than Empress Cixi and her court. <del>This is</del> <del>a</del> <del>the emphasis on</del> This a convincing account of the consequences, as although Cixi was declared a war criminal in the Boxer Protocol this was rescinded a year later, <del>and</del> <del>the</del> so there were little consequences imposed on her as <del>on</del> an individual by the foreign powers. The interpretation further claims that 'it was the Boxers and the Qing court' who were blamed <del>by the</del> for the</p>
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'disasters of the summer of 1900', This leading to a loss of prestige on the world stage. ~~What is not clear~~ This is also a convincing explanation of the consequences as the atrocities committed by the Boxers, such as the killing of 44 missionaries and their families, were widely reported in the Western media, whereas the atrocities committed by the foreign ~~troop~~ troops were not as widely broadcast. This led to the coining of the phrase 'yellow peril' by Kaiser ~~both~~ Wilhelm II of Germany, adding the alienation <sup>of China</sup> and degradation of ~~her~~ <sup>its</sup> reputation. However, this interpretation places great emphasis on how China was ~~badly~~ humiliated by the Boxer rebellion 'more fully than any event before it'. However, there had already been a precedent set of demanding reparations from China, such as ~~£0~~ \$21 million in the Treaty of Nanjing, and of foreign concessions in treaty ports such as Canton being set up. This emphasis on the Qing becoming 'hostage' to the foreign interests is unconvincing, as ~~the~~ China had been humiliated since the end of the First Opium War, the Boxer Rebellion and its consequences did not



establish a new precedent as to how China should be treated.<sup>a</sup> <sup>in a nationally</sup> As a whole, the interpretation is mostly convincing, but its central emphasis on the ~~new~~ changing reputation of China among other nations is much less convincing.

Interpretation A is <sup>a</sup> highly convincing explanation of the consequences of the Boxer Rebellion, ~~especi~~ due to its emphasis on the domestic issues faced by the Qing as a result of the rebellion. It claims that the consequences of the Boxer <sup>Rebellion</sup> ~~Rebellion~~ Protocol of 1901, such as China being forced to pay \$450 million taels of reparations, caused the destruction of the 'little power it [the Qing] held.' This is highly convincing, as many saw China's defeat and subsequent humiliation as a final sign of its inability to ~~stan~~ resist foreign influence. The Boxer Rebellion would be the last time that China the Qing would be seen as a symbol of resistance, and ~~as~~ ~~all other wars following such as the First World War~~ ~~to~~ there would be no further ~~clashes~~ significant clashes with foreign powers until the end of the Qing dynasty and the start of WWI.

~~It also places~~ <sup>Furthermore, it places</sup> great emphasis on ~~the~~ <sup>her</sup> Cixi's changing views on reform. Rather than crush it, like in the 100 days, she embraced it, 'to rally support for the imperial government'. Many reforms, such as the right to build local railways were highly popular with the people of China, and the creation of the Ministry of Agriculture, which was the first major reform targetted at peasants in Cixi's rule. The interpretation's emphasis on the failure of the reforms, them being seen as 'unconvincing' and 'grudgingly granted' is somewhat convincing. Although some reforms, such as the elections of 1909 and the talks regarding a constitutional monarchy were ~~was~~ highly progressive, others, such as the nationalisation of local railways were seen as attempts to keep economic control over the provinces. In this way, the Boxer Rebellion, and the failures of the reforms it caused, could be seen as the precursor ~~the~~ to the 1911 revolution. Overall, this interpretation is highly convincing in its ~~empha~~ emphasis on the domestic ~~&~~ problems and the solutions that the Qing tried to implement as a result of the Boxer Rebellion.

To conclude, Interpretation A is the more convincing explanation due to its focus on domestic issues caused by the Boxer Rebellion and the solutions created by the Qing, as ~~it~~ these problems were shown to worsen as a result of the rebellion, and were not new problems caused as a result of the ~~Box~~ it. On the other hand, Interpretation B is less convincing as it presents the international issues faced by the Qing. Although Interpretation B is convincing when explaining some of the international changes to China and ~~its~~ the Rebellion's impact on ordinary Chinese people, it is less convincing than A as it presents China's status as a global ~~parai parai pariah~~ as a new phenomenon, rather than one that ~~had~~ had been building since the First Opium War and was worsened as a result of the Boxer Rebellion. This difference, the emphasis on worsening existing problems in A whilst creating new problems in B, is the reason why A is a more ~~convincing~~ convincing explanation.

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 responses will test a hypothesis and reach a supported judgement.

### Question 2\*

**2\*** 'Chinese government rule under the Communist Party, from 1949, was unlike anything that had gone before.'

How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1839 to 1989?

**[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, and repression, generally focusing on these three. At the top end, candidates assessed the period after 1949, utilising two examples, and compared it to the period before 1949, again using two examples. They then evaluated the extent, within each theme government rule was 'unlike anything that had gone before'. They came to interim judgements before producing 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, or tried to assess ruler by ruler, without focusing on the wording of the question.

### Assessment for learning



Successful responses grouped examples from pre and post 1949. This was often using the word 'similarly' to signpost and then explaining the level that it was unlike what had gone before, assessing the theme of the paragraph and why. Responses that were less strong did not develop the response and simply used the word 'similarly' without describing why they were similar.

## Exemplar 2

2	<p>Chinese government rule under the Communist party from 1949 was ideologically unlike anything that had gone before, but utilised similar methods of control and exercised a similar level of centralisation, albeit <sup>arguably</sup> <del>more</del> so, <del>due to other periods from 1839-1989</del> before it. Repression was a consistent method of control from 1839 - 1989, whereas its levels of centralisation were similar to the Qing, but not to the Warlord period or <del>the</del> the Nanjing government. The period of Communist rule was significant and <del>was</del> changed in many ways, but not entirely unlike anything from before.</p>
	<p>The Communist Party under Mao ruled under the governing ideology of Communism which was used to dictate the trajectory of China, unlike any <del>of</del> government before it. Mao's implementation of Communism in the form of collectives and communes under which 120 million households <del>was</del> were under was unlike any system of governance seen before. Whilst a centralised governing ideology can be seen with Confucian ideology providing the Qing</p>



with the Mandate of Heaven used to justify their rule and the requirement of obedience to authority, the principles are particularly different as Mao's aim was to crush hierarchy in society and emphasise the importance of a peasant-led society built through the power of mass mobilisation. The idea of democratic centralism, however, exercised by Mao and Deng in their leadership of the Communist party, providing them with the mandate for a one-party dictatorship, was also used by Chiang Kai Shek. The GMD was regarded by the Comintern in Moscow, also under Communist ideology, as the revolutionary force in China. Whilst this is a point of similarity, ultimately a point of similarity in the ideologies of the GMD and CCP can be seen in regard to their emphasis on fighting imperialism and need for 'people's welfare'. There was a common emphasis on the importance of the Chinese people. Whilst this is a point of similarity, ultimately the very nature and principle of Communist ideology following 1949 sets the Communist rule apart from the governance that

came before it.

Whilst ideology was a mark of significant difference to the governments before, the use of repression was a consistent method of control from ~~the~~ 1839-1989. The Communist Party ~~exercised~~ exercised the use of labour camps (laogai) where an estimated 25 million people died. Under Mao, there was a particularly crackdown on landlords with millions ~~of~~ killed or sent to labour camps. Repression was also seen under Deng, where the protests for democracy in Tiananmen Square in 1989 saw the use of the army to crush ~~protests~~ <sup>method</sup> them violently. This ~~use~~ of control was not unique to the Communist Party, however. The Qing often used executions against those that did not submit to their rule. Particularly, ~~those~~ <sup>men</sup> that did not wear ~~the~~ their traditional hair style of the queue would face being executed. Chiang Kai Shek similarly enforced the use of repression through surveillance using the Blue Shirts, inspired by the Gestapo in Nazi

Germany, who used torture to extract information about those suspected of being critical against the regime.

The use of repression as a primary method of control was therefore not unique to the rule of the Communist Party and was seen under the Qing and Chiang Kai Shek.

The extent of power exercised by the Communist Party from 1949 was extremely centralised; whilst it was ~~so~~ particularly successful in doing so, ~~it~~ the Qing also exercised a great deal of centralisation. From 1949, the whole of China was reunified following a long period of political disunity under Chiang Kai Shek, who only had control of  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the China or  $\frac{2}{3}$  of its population at any one time, as well as the period of Warlords before him during a time of intense political fragmentation. The extent of centralisation therefore from 1949 was particularly significant. However, the Qing also exercised a great deal of control ~~for~~ over China for most of their time in power, ~~was~~ disrupted by the Taiping Rebellion.

2		(1851-64), as well as the Nian, Panhuang, and Dungan rebellions during the same time period. The period of time they had <del>never</del> ruled over China, however, demonstrates the <sup>successful</sup> extent of their power, making the Communist government's centralisation similar to the Qing.
		In conclusion, ideologically, the Communist <del>government</del> Party from 1949 can be said to be different from the governments that came before it due to the very nature of the Communist principles themselves, despite similarities in ideas of democratic centralism and

		people's welfare to the GMD. However, their use of repression was not unique to them and was exercised consistently as a primary method of control for governments across the period. The extent of power was great under the Communist Party. Whilst it marked a change from the periods of political instability and intolerance under the Warlords and Chiang Kai Shek, it shares similarities with the Qing government. The Communist Party's rule was therefore unique ideologically but quite similar in terms of its methods of control and its extent of power. <del>for</del>
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This candidate response was marked in Level 6. There is clear comparison and evaluation of at least three different examples per paragraph, explaining why they were more or less effective. This is particularly evident in the paragraph on repression, where the candidate clearly compares Mao to Deng, the Qing dynasty and Chiang. There are also good end of paragraph judgements and a conclusion.

### Question 3\*

**3\*** 'Chinese rural society changed very little during the period from 1839 to 1989.'

How far do you agree?

**[25]**

This was a popular question. Candidates were able to focus on thematic paragraphs that were related to rural society. They had the freedom to define this as they wished. Many focused on land, access to food, women, and religion.

At the top end, candidates assessed three or four examples within each paragraph, evaluating the extent to which there was change. They came to interim judgements as to why there was/was not 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 the examples within thematic paragraphs.

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



## Question 4\*

4\* 'Chinese foreign policy in the period from 1839 to 1989 was largely successful.'

How far do you agree?

[25]

This essay produced the fewest responses out of the essay questions, but there were a wide range of marks. Candidates were able to focus on thematic paragraphs that were related to expansion, foreign influence, trade, and relations with major powers. Only three of these were required for a successful answer.

At the top end, candidates assessed three or four examples within each paragraph, evaluating the extent to which foreign policy was successful. They came to interim judgements as to why this was the case 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 some/all of the examples without comparing why or how they showed success over time.

## Exemplar 3

Q	U	Chinese foreign policy was successful to
U		some extent between 1839 to 1989. China
		was not successful in terms of diplomacy
		and were consistently subjected to exploitative,
		treaties, <sup>from the west</sup> furthermore China was unable to benefit
		from trade neither were they able to defeat
		win wars without heavy <del>loss</del> losses. Overall

		China had limited success in terms of foreign policy.
		China's diplomatic relations with other countries had limited success throughout the period. From the First Opium War (1839-42) the Second Treaty of Nanjing, (1842) Treaty of Nanjing-Tientsin (1858) to the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895) and Sino Soviet Treaty (1950) China has always been the victim of exploitative treaties. The Treaty of Nanjing promised 10 million in compensation, treaty ports be opened and a reduction of the Canton system, which set the trend for the unequal treaties that dominated China in the later 19th century as the Treaty of Nanjing also demanded more 11 treaty ports to be open to foreigners. China's sovereignty was also damaged by these as Britain France and other European countries received extra-territoriality within China - this is clearly a failure by the Chinese. Similarly, the Chinese received limited success in diplomatic relations outside of the west. However, the Peace and Friends Treaty (1978) was the first time China and Japan had mutual agreements unlike the 2S demands (1915) and the Treaty of Shimonoseki (April 1895). It had limited success for changing perceptions of the Japanese due to the lingering memory of the rape of Nanjing during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Furthermore, China <del>continue</del> was even exploited by the USSR in the Sino Soviet Treaty (1950)

4		<p>When placed a heavy interest on a loan of 300 million dollars to the Chinese for investment, demonstrating China's lack of interest at being treated as an international equal undermining the desire of China to be a strong independent nation. Overall, China was had limited success in creating strong diplomatic relations with both the East and West, as there was a continued trend from the early 19th century of China being exploited.</p> <p>China had limited success with trade with foreign powers. At the start of the period there <del>was a demand</del> was no demand for trade with other countries as China believed themselves to be the middle kingdom - the head of civilisation.</p>
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therefore not needing goods from other countries, which is similar to Mao's attitude of economic exploration by the west. At the start of the period the foreign trade system consisted of 13 merchants was in charge of trade which was limited to Canton, this is similar to Deng's limitation of trade to Special Economic Zones, Shenzhen, Xiamen, Dalian and Shanghai. At this time China was very unsuccessful at maintaining trade just like the trade deficit of China had increased from 16 million taels to 220 million taels, the value of trade exports fell from 31 million dollars to 8 million dollars during the second Sino-Japanese war. ~~this is unlike the value furthermore before the first~~ Opium War China's exports and trade balance rose from 26 million to 38 million between 1828 and 1836, ~~which was similar to the~~ increase of China's exports rate by 500%. Under Deng a steeper increase than any other period in China. Therefore, there was a continuous trend in China as a result of the 2nd modernisation. Therefore, when Chinese leaders actively supported trade they had greater success with foreign relations with foreign powers. Overall, China was very successful with trade throughout the period, but this is also linked to China having successful (in terms of the west) relations with diplomacy.

China's was largely unsuccessful in its conflicts with foreign powers. Although China achieved some success after the Communist take over in 1949, this represented only a small proportion of the period. Under Deng Xiaoping's 4th modernisation (defence) China was able to claim to have won the Sino-Vietnamese war 1979 which was prompted by the USSR and ~~Vietnam~~, primarily under Mao the CCP were able to claim that throughout the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) that they were the ones truly fighting the Japanese, and the Korean War (1950-53). However, for both of these wars the Chinese experienced severe losses. A third of the PLA was killed in the Korean War and thousands were killed in the Sino-Vietnamese war. Furthermore, in terms of conflict with the West the Chinese were always losing. The First Opium War, Second Opium War and Great Boer Uprising (1895-1901) all demonstrated this and resulted in humiliating treaties. The same can be said with China's warfare with Japan - as they were easily defeated in the First Sino-Japanese War exposing the failure at the Great Leap Forward. Overall, the Chinese were always losing conflicts with foreign powers demonstrating its lack of success which directly led to China's diplomatic exploitation; there was a pattern

		of defeat throughout the period.
		In conclusion, China had little diplomatic
		success throughout the period. Though there were
		small examples of success for war the Korean
		war, and trade treaty ports China was
		always to

This candidate response was marked in Level 5. There is clear comparison and evaluation of at least three different examples per paragraph, explaining why they were more or less effective. This is particularly effective in the paragraph that deals with the various treaties. The end of paragraph judgements and conclusion were, however, not developed enough to warrant Level 6.

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