

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y206/01 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.

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Paper Y206 series overview

Y206 is one of twenty four units in Paper 2 for the A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about 100 years through a short answer essay question and a traditional essay question. The paper contains two questions, each having two parts, a short answer essay and a traditional essay. Candidates have to answer both parts of one question.

To do well on the short answer essay question, candidates need to consider the significance or importance of both issues, factors, individuals or events mentioned in relation to the question. Having analysed or explained both they must reach a supported judgement as to which is the most important or significant.

To do well on the traditional essay, candidates need to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. To reach the higher levels candidates need to assess the issues they discuss and reach a supported judgement, at least in the conclusion.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short answer essay reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question discussed at least two issues in depth in the essay question gave supporting detail that was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay were unable to support their answer with relevant or accurate material did not focus on the precise wording of the question made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

Question 1 (a) (i) and (ii)

1

(a) Which of the following was impacted more by the New World?

(i) Spanish agriculture

(ii) Spanish industry

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

Many candidates wrote about the New World rather than the impact on Spanish agriculture and industry. As a result, many responses were not focused on the demands of the question or made only very general points.

There was some consideration of the inability of Spanish agriculture to take advantage of the new markets presented by the New World, but few commented on the threat to the Spanish wine or olive oil industry.

In dealing with industry, some responses were able to comment on the growth of shipbuilding because of the transatlantic trade and how materials from the New World stimulated industry, with some comments about the development of a sugar or tobacco industry. There was also the occasional comment about the impact on the textile industry.

Assessment for learning



It is important that all elements within the specification, such as the 'economic impact of the New World on Spanish trade and economy' are taught, as all aspects of the specification will be examined.

Question 1 (b)*

(b)* How effective were the policies of Isabella and Ferdinand towards the Moriscos and Conversos?

[20]

Many candidates knew a great deal about the policies towards both the Moriscos and Conversos, but often found it more challenging linking this knowledge to the focus of the question: effective, and instead wanted to write about the success and failures of the policies.

Responses usually focused on the issues of the War in Granada, the use of the Inquisition and the policy of expulsion. Stronger responses were able to compare the effectiveness of the policies in Aragon and Castile, with candidates often arguing that the policies were more effective in Aragon than Castile. Relations with the Moriscos and Conversos were discussed and some considered whether forced conversion or expulsion was effective and commented on the number of false conversos.

There was some discussion of the effectiveness of the Inquisition in bringing about conversion and how many were put to death. Some responses discussed whether these policies were effective in ending Convivencia and creating religious unity in Spain, with many arguing that this did not happen under Ferdinand and Isabella as it was still an issue for Charles. The effectiveness of the War with Granada was considered, but when discussing this many drifted to success and argued that the conquest, although long, was a success rather than considering whether it was an effective way to deal with the region.

In assessing the effectiveness stronger responses did consider the issue of revolts and unrest as a sign that the policies were less effective.

Assessment for learning



It is important that candidates are taught to focus on the key words in the question.

Question 2 (a) (i) and (ii)

2

(a) Which of the following was the greater challenge to the development of the Spanish economy during the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella?

- (i) Agricultural problems
- (ii) Customs barriers

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

This was less popular than Question 1(a), but as Exemplar 1 shows, this was often handled better. In particular, candidates were able to write in some depth about the agricultural problems. This ranged from the more general issue of the nature of the land in Spain and the growing demands for food, which led to an increased reliance on imports, to the more specific consideration of the dominance of the Mesta and sheep farming.

Knowledge of customs barriers was often more limited, but as seen in Exemplar 1, this was not always true and reference was made to internal customs barriers between the different regions which raised the price of goods and was therefore a disincentive to trade. However, as Exemplar 1 also illustrates, greater depth was needed to go higher. Comments about customs officials at both internal frontiers and maritime ports, as well as tolls being evidence of the lack of unity, which served to hinder development could be used to further develop the issue.

Exemplar 1

2a.	Custom barriers were the greatest challenge to the development of the Spanish economy during the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella.
	Agricultural policies were largely caused by the prioritisation of the Mesta, Sheep headers, as wool provided a reliable source of income to the Crown. In 1440, all enclosures made during the reign of Henry IV were destroyed and all common land was returned to pasture for sheep. This meant that the land used for agriculture and crops was now exclusively used, to rear sheep and by 1510, nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ of the population of cities lacked lacked sufficient grain. However, the impact of famine on the development of Spanish economy was limited. Firstly, the economy was largely dependent on wool - which was protected by Isabella. Therefore, whilst the population struggled, the economy suffered less. Secondly, Aragon

were able to export wheat in from Sicily and Sardinia so poor agriculture problems were largely limited to Castile.

Internal custom barriers were never removed under Isabella and Ferdinand which hugely stifled trade. Despite standardising the Castilian, Valencian, and Catalan coin in 1497, the fact tolls continued to exist made internal trade virtually impossible. As a result, ~~virtually~~ every economy - except for Seville that had exclusive rights to trade with the New World - plummeted and ~~regional~~ economic disparity between coastal regions, that could trade abroad, and landlocked regions became pronounced. ~~This had a~~ ~~concrete~~ This had a concrete impact on the economy because ability to trade wool declined, so despite the protection of the Mesta, the wool trade stagnated after 1490.

Overall, custom barriers acted

		as a greater Challenge to the
		development of the Spanish
		economy because, unlike agricultural
		problems, it actively prevented
		the growth of the Spanish
		economy. Moreover, Custom barriers
		impacted the economy of both
		Aragon and Castile so its spatial
		impact was larger. Finally,
		Custom barriers prevented other
		policies like standardisation
		of currency and protection of
		mesta from ever translating into
		economic growth.

Question 2 (b)*

(b)* How secure was Charles I's rule of Spain by the time of his abdication?

[20]

The focus of responses needed to be on 'the time of his abdication', and there were a number of responses that focused more on the problems he faced in the early part of the reign, writing in depth about unrest, or even drifted to the problems he faced as Holy Roman Emperor. However, Exemplar 2 shows, where there was focus on the actual question candidates were able to score well, making a series of judgements about each issue discussed and reaching an overall judgement as to how secure Charles was.

Responses that focused on the question considered a range of issues, but religion, finance and the economy were the most frequent, with some also discussing the security of his borders. Responses argued that religiously Charles was secure as threats from the Reformation had been defeated, or never really entered Spain, and other religious challenges were weak. In terms of both the economy and finance, responses were less positive, pointing to the problems of debt and bankruptcy, while there were also some interesting discussions about the impact of the New World on the economy and whether the silver influx made Charles' rule more secure.

In discussing Spain's borders the threat of France and the Ottomans were usually considered with varying arguments. Some responses did discuss government and the development of the conciliar system and the use of letrados, which strengthened royal rule.

Exemplar 2

	b.	Charles's rule of Spain was not particularly secure by the time of his abdication. Whilst he had largely dealt with 'heretics', he had failed to secure Spain's borders and his expensive foreign policy expeditions had made Charles unpopular with the Cortes.
		In terms of religious threats to Charles, he was very secure by the time he abdicated in 1556.

Firstly, Lutheranism had never found roots in Spain. By 1556, just 106 Lutherans had ever been tried, and 65 of those tried were foreigners. Secondly, Jews had largely been dealt with by Isabella of Castile so this did not pose a threat to Charles.

Thirdly, the radical Illuminist groups — that did not believe in institutionalised Catholicism ~~but~~ but rather private meditation — were shut down by the Inquisition in the 1520s. After their leader, Isabel de la Cruz, was arrested in 1525, the movement largely lost its momentum. Therefore, ensuring that Catholicism and, thus, Charles remained secure. Finally, Charles was able to strike deals with the morisco communities to ensure security. For example, in 1526, Charles secured an agreement where the moriscos were allowed to keep traditional dress in return for a 90,000 ~~maravedis~~ maravedis subsidy to the crown. Therefore, negotiation prevented any moriscos

uprising during Charles's reign. As a result, by Charles's abdication, he had successfully shut down any 'deviant' religious groups and thus ensured religious uprisings would not make his rule of Spain insecure.

Charles's rule of Spain was not secure, in terms of border protection and alliances, by the time of his abdication. However, it was not wholly unsuccessful. Firstly, after the ~~1529-1544~~ Habsburg-Valois war, Charles signed the Peace of Crepy with France in 1544. This ensured protection on at least one border. Similarly, ~~Charles~~ Charles struck an alliance with England after his son, Philip, married Mary Tudor in 1554. However, this was incredibly short-lived with Mary dying just a few years later and being replaced with Anglican Elizabeth I. Nonetheless, the biggest threat to Charles's rule was the complete inability to

deal with the Ottomans. In 1516, the Ottomans secured an alliance with the South African Corsairs which allowed them to use Algiers as a base to attack Spain and Italy. Moreover, Charles had several resounding defeats which made him look extremely weak on the global stage. For example, in 1541, Charles tried to attack Algiers which ended with the loss of 200 ships and 17,000 men. Therefore, Charles's inability to secure Spain's borders made his rule consistently less stable, with the Ottomans continuing to harass shipment between Spain and Sicily. However, we ought to concede that Charles was still somewhat ~~esse~~ secure in terms of borders by his abdication due to his alliance with the French and English, as well as the fact the Ottomans never attempted to invade or overthrow Charles.

Finally, Charles's rule was very

insecure in terms of economics and relationship with the cortes. Firstly, Charles's expensive foreign expeditions landed him in a huge amount of debt. By 1542, Charles's income was 470,000 ducats but his spending was 1.5 million. This is because 65% of the expenditure was used to pay of Juros - government debt with an interest rate of 7%.

This meant that Charles lacked the money to successfully secure Spain's borders or appease the impoverished Spanish population. Similarly, this level of spending fractured Charles's relationship with the cortes, who believed Charles was using Spanish money to fulfill non Spanish interests like war with France. For example, between 1529-1544, Charles spent an average of 100,000 - 1.2 million ducats on the Italian wars. The cortes irritation of this is demonstrated by the fact they refused to grant Charles a tax for

foreign expeditions in 1527, 1538, and 1544. As a result, Charles was dependent on Jews to raise money. Therefore, Charles's economic and political security by the time of his abdication was very weak, with a huge amount of debt and the Cortes consistently refusing to grant tax.

~~Overall, Charles was pretty~~

Overall, Charles's rule of Spain was pretty insecure by the time of his abdication.

Charles's rule was religiously very secure but this is, arguably, the least important. This is because, whilst religious deviance went against Charles's personal faith, it never posed a threat to his right to rule as king and the Inquisition were able to deal with it swiftly. Charles's rule of Spain in terms of border security was relatively weak. Whilst he did secure alliances with France and England, Spain's

		borders were consistently
		threatened by the Ottomans.
		Finally, Charles was extremely
		economically and politically
		insecure due to ^{shown by} his reliance
		on debt. Therefore, overall, Charles
		was pretty insecure by the
		time of his abdication.

Assessment for learning



It is important that candidates focus on the key dates or event in the actual question – in this instance, the abdication.

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