

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY A**

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**H505**

For first teaching in 2015

**Y308/01 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 Y308 series overview

Y308 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>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> </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>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.

### Question 1

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

Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of Catherine de Medici's role in the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre. [30]

The two interpretations offered very different views as to the nature of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre. It is important that responses take an overview of the interpretation and consider what view it is offering about the issue in the question, rather than cherry pick a phrase and then evaluate that.

Interpretation A argued that Catherine was central to the planning of the murder of Coligny. Interpretation B suggested that she was not to blame as it would have gone against her basic aim of ending the Wars of Religion.

Exemplar 1 provides an example of a more successful, focused response that was placed in Level 6. It shows the depth of knowledge and level of evaluation expected. There were a number of candidates who simply explained the two interpretations, often using knowledge to support that explanation, but did not evaluate the passages. Evaluation requires candidates to give a value to the interpretation in each passage about the issue in the question, hence it is important to take an overview of what the view of the interpretation is.

There was much contextual knowledge that could have been used to test the views. In supporting Interpretation A, responses often made reference to the influence of Coligny and the issue of war and the influence of the Guise family. However, many responses challenged this and argued the interpretation went against her aim of ending religious conflict. This knowledge was either used to challenge Interpretation A or support Interpretation B and responses made reference to the Peace of St Germain. In challenging Interpretation A some response also referenced the limited influence of Coligny. However, others argued that Interpretation A was correct and challenged Interpretation B, arguing that many at the time accused her of plotting, including her own son, the Duke of Anjou. Either argument was valid provided the evaluation was supported.

## Exemplar 1

1	<p>As the Queen mother, who had even acted as regent from 1560, Catherine de Medici was intensely involved with the political climate in France, especially the ongoing war of religion from 1563, and therefore must have had some impact on the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (August 1572). Passage A suggests Catherine herself devised the killings, and that she did so to maintain control, whereas Passage B is more concerned in mentioning her aims for peace and inconsistent motives, <del>which</del> because it takes into account the climate and context of the time.</p> <p>Passage A suggests that Catherine's assassination was Catherine "Spring[ing] her trap", and that instead of the Guise as accomplices, she "Use[d]" them. It is not overly concerned from this point, as the <del>main</del> truth around the council at midnight on the 24<sup>th</sup> August is heavily ambiguous, as Passage A <del>mentions</del> conceals. Therefore, it is difficult to tie Catherine's "execution" directly to Catherine alone - it was not her who stormed Catherine's household with 60 men, nor her who shot his arm on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August from the top floor of a Guise house. Therefore, at least some of the blame must be attributed elsewhere. The passage equates Charles IX and Catherine as almost one active entity by "She and the King", but it is important to note that Charles is by this point 22 years old - more than old enough to take matters into his own hands, <del>and Passage A does</del> and for Catherine's "trap" to be successful, Charles IX would have had to approve of it to some degree. Therefore, Catherine's assassination cannot</p>
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have been solely the fault of Catherine de Medici, because the Council was ambiguous, and there were others involved. Therefore, this interpretation is not wholly convincing.

Passage A goes on ~~the~~ to state that Catherine's "ultimate goal" was to effect the "downfall of both of the Houses" (Guise and Huguenots), but this is unconvincing because it ~~is~~ is not, like Passage B, consistent with Catherine's past actions and efforts. The vague fears that "Perhaps Coligny would mishap the king" were not wholly unfounded - during the civil war, an attempted ambush nearly did just that - but it is not consistent to say that fears of Coligny's influence (which involved a clash with the Habsburgs in the Netherlands) atoned the almost certain confusion and even violence which may have come from such an action. Catherine had asked for reconciliation tentatively from ~~the Huguenots~~ the Coligny of Passy 1561 and in her regency to the Peace of Saint Germain 1570, and therefore since this shows a prolonged aim, it is inconsistent to suggest she would abandon all her efforts from the past 10 years. Furthermore, Catherine was acutely aware of the ~~political~~ climate of object dehumanisation occurring within France, since the Placards Affair in 1534, with the inhumane treatment of the 14 executed in Meaux in 1546, and preachers such as Simon Vigor stirring hatred. She would not have wanted to provoke further violence, which is what the past decades had shown to happen from assassinations, such as the ~~the~~ Duc de Guise's during the Siege of Orleans in ~~the~~ February 1563 triggering the



civil war. Therefore, this shows that Catherine would have been aware that her actions would have brought about effects much more damaging to her legacy and country, than positives, ~~and~~ which makes the interpretation less convincing.

Passage B contrasts passage A by stating that Catherine could not have been responsible, and the contextual efforts and circumstance support this interpretation. Jacquin's claim that "this contradicts everything that we know about her role in the search for peace", and although she had previously ~~for~~ assisted Catholics in the Civil War, and although a strike on Huguenots could have ~~and~~ ended heresy in France, these arguments are far outweighed by the extensive efforts with which she went to seek reconciliation, such as her repeated efforts to convince Jeanne D'Albret to agree to the wedding of ~~the~~ Henry of Navarre and Marguerite de Valois (set for 1572) - which exemplifies determination - and her reduction of the Crise between 1560 - which shows political sympathy to Huguenots. She did not always follow the wishes of the Catholic Parliament - her terms of St. Germain were often hugely unpopular such as the removal of the Castles Cross in December 1571, and even Coligny and Protestant leaders claimed that she was surprisingly empathetic in peace talks, showing that she was not of the same mind as ~~the~~ Catholics such as the Crise. Therefore, Passage B's claim that Catherine de Medici's responsibility for the massacre is



inconsistent with all her past actions, and is therefore contradictory.

Passage B suggests any motives for the massacre were not as significant or pressing than might have otherwise been thought. Jaumier writes that "The king would not enter the war that his mother feared so much". The king did have some interest in a war with ~~France~~ Philip II, but invading the Netherlands, which was at in religious turmoil after the 1567 arrest of Tralles and William of Orange's 1572 conversion to Protestantism, was not something a Catholic monarch such as Charles would want, especially in the wake of the Seventh War of Religion and the Italian Wars (1494-1559) had been so economically detrimental. Catherine knew this too, and so after August 9<sup>th</sup>, there was essentially no direct threat from Coligny, ~~she~~ strengthening Passage B's point. Even other fears such as Peligny's 4000 troops stationed near Paris are inconsistent because a massacre would only provoke violence. Passage B warns "Not to overestimate the role of Coligny" - his influence on the king was still small in comparison to others at court, and on top of that, he spent much time away from court preceding the Massacre - from December 1571 to August 1572, he only spent a total of 5 weeks at court, which strongly supports Passage B's claim.

In conclusion, while passage A brings some relevant points concerning Catherine's potential fears, its suggestions of her aims are not consistent with her past actions, and even imply that she would have wanted the Paris

		<p> massacre of 2000 Huguenots, which does not follow with  the Royal effort to stop the killings. Passage B, on the  other hand, is much more convincing, because it evaluates  Catherine's contradictory attitude and the small relevance of  the proposed motives, thus better explaining Catherine's  role in the Massacre. </p>
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### Assessment for learning



'Evaluate' means give a value to the interpretation. In simple terms, is the view valid?

## 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\*** 'The revival of the Catholic Church in the period from 1492 to 1610, owed little to the impact of Protestantism.'

How far do you agree?

**[25]**

This was the most popular question, but many struggled to display synthesis despite having a good knowledge of the topic. Candidates were usually able to identify a range of themes, such as doctrine; discipline; the role of individuals; new orders; Councils; rulers and the Papacy. However, within those issues they were unable to compare whether they were the result of Protestantism or an already underway Catholic revival. In discussing new orders, for example, some argued that these were already underway and continued to develop even during the Reformation, but perhaps changed their emphasis and direction, as seen with the Jesuits in terms of education, but were also not influenced by the Reformation as they spread Catholicism to the New World and Asia.

An area that could have been developed was that of secular rulers; a case could have been made that they did respond to the challenge of Protestantism, as seen with Philip, although that could have been compared to the work of Ferdinand and Isabella.

In discussing the use of Councils, Trent might suggest that it was a response to Protestantism, but again there had been Councils before, but what had changed was the urgency.

Exemplar 2 shows a response that shows some synthesis, particularly in one part of the essay and this is why it reached Level 5. In order to go to Level 6 it would need to be more sustained and it might be helpful for centres to compare this with the exemplars for Y306 and Y312.

### Misconception



Synthesis does not mean stating something is similar; there needs to be direct comparison and explanation as to whether something is similar or different, or whether there is change or continuity.

## Exemplar 2

2	<p>The rise of Protestantism from 1517 arguably catalysed the reform of the Catholic Church from 1592 to 1610 and the attempt to reconcile the Church led to much-needed reform. However, with regard to doctrine, discipline and the ability to reach the laity, the actual impact of Protestantism in these areas is outshone by the role of Popes, individual reformers, and the New Orders.</p> <p>Church doctrine was impacted by the compassions of the Protestant Reformation, but made no concessions to Luther in the Council of Trent (1545-63), and later reform was entirely separate. It is worth noting that Luther's own impact on 1517 is diminished by the fact that he was building upon already present reforms - Cisneros had published the first printed missal (1500) and breviary (1502) before Luther claimed of an ignorant laity, and the teachings and moral rigidity of Savanorola in 1494 directly influenced Luther. This set a trend for doctrine of instead of Protestantism promulgating Catholic Reform, reform often occurred in spite of Protestantism. Much of the delay for Paul III's proposed councils in Mantua and Vicenza 1536-42 were effected by the rejection from Protestant princes in the Holy Roman Empire - Charles V's attempts to pacify them with Regensburg in 1540 were unsuccessful, leading to the Battle of Mühlberg 1547, which meant that Trent began to run more smoothly. Furthermore, the movement of mysticism influenced by Teresa of Avila owed nothing to Protestantism, much like how Loyola's Spiritual Exercises (1548) came from his own meditation, emphasising the</p>
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trend - her discaled Carmelites in 1562 were hugely influential in Poland, leading to a translation of her works there in 1598. This trend of later years activity independent of Protestantism is further seen with the hugely significant Sixto-Clementine Vulgate in 1592, which contrasts the doctrinal decrees of Trent (largely 1545-7) because they rejected Protestantism, whereas Clement and Sixtus ~~very~~ enacted their own reform. So in doctrine Protestantism was not significant.

Protestantism prompted some disciplinary reform, but it was not until there was a significant climate of reform-minded people that the Catholic Church could ~~achieve~~ reform. Luther's ~~ideas~~ were one of many voices that were ignored by the early Renaissance popes - Erasmus's anti-clericalist *In Praise of Folly* (1509) reportedly simply amused Leo X, and Alexander VI burnt Savonarola in 1498. Therefore, this perceiving instance of disciplinary complaints being ignored ~~as~~ only changed with the changed attitudes of ~~the~~ popes like Paul III, and had little effect at the time themselves. What was more successful was the growing fashion of "the Devout", which spanned a large time ~~range~~ all the way to the Brethren of Common Life in the Netherlands. In 1514, the Oratory of Divine Love focused on grassroots reform that ~~gave~~ saw influence to ~~a~~ later reformers, such as Libert in Verona in 1527. Trent reforms were significant in improving discipline, and it must be conceded that many of



These - though not all - resulted from Luther's legacy of Protestantism, such as the education of priests 1563, though interestingly, this was the same goal as Loyola's Jesuits (1540), who actually enacted change. The people who took reform into their own hands, from Loyola in 1540 linked to Clement VIII pretty busy jubilee year, was the real impact. While therefore Protestantism provoked some form of discipline, the ultimate general reform and changes resulted from pretty as a wider scale.

Protestantism certainly was effective in reaching the people, inspiring many countries to break with Rome, but in the latter half of the century, the new orders and popes were back to large numbers of people. The Renaissance popes often did not reach the laity, and there was general resentment to Rome in the early years across Europe, contrasted to the 3 million pilgrims there in the 1600 Jubilee shows a dramatic change across the entire century. In a way, Protestant influence gave Catholicism something to fight back against - Peter Canisius's ~~new~~ restoration of Catholic reputation in Germany from 1549 is a sound example of using Protestantism to reach the people. Other countries saw reform due to Protestant threat - this is continued in 1551, where the Bishop of Ermland introduced Jesuits to Poland specifically to combat Protestantism. This meant the impact of Protestantism was ironically helpful in some areas, because it allowed the Catholic Church to restore

		their reputation, but in countries like England from 1534 and
		1559, Denmark and Sweden 1536-7, they posed more
	and	of a hindrance than a help.
		In conclusion, the Reformation was largely Catholic
		rather than a "Catholic Reformation" when it came
		to doctrine and discipline - the idea of individual
		piety for discipline and grassroots reform was much
		more significant than Luther's impact, though with
		speaking the people, there was some tangible effect
		of Protestantism. Overall, it is <del>largely</del> little
		owed to Protestantism.

### Question 3\*

3\* 'The key institutions of the Catholic Church were radically changed by the Catholic Reformation.'

How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1492 to 1610?

[25]

This was the least popular question, with many candidates unable to identify what is meant by an 'institution'. This could have included bodies such as the Papacy, the Inquisition, the Curia, religious orders and the clergy.

Candidates should then have considered the extent to which these institutions changed or remained the same over the period. This was perhaps best seen with the Papacy with candidates able to compare the Renaissance Papacy with the improvements later in the period or the numbers who visited Rome in 1600 and compare that with the events of the Sack of Rome in 1527.

In discussing reforms that impacted the institution of bishops, again it might be argued that there was a radical change from many residing in Rome, or never visiting their diocese, to the later period when they were sent back to their sees. However, this view could be challenged by reference to individuals such as Borromeo or Cisneros. The Inquisition might have been seen as a point of continuity as it had been established before the Catholic Reformation and did not change, although it might be argued that its focus did change, similarly religious orders and their development had been seen before this period, although with the Jesuits a case for radical change could be made.

### Misconception



Candidates did not understand what was meant by an institution.



## Question 4\*

- 4\* 'The contributions of reformers, such as Erasmus and Loyola, were more important in shaping the Catholic Reformation than the actions of the popes during the period from 1492 to 1610.'

How far do you agree?

[25]

This was a popular question and there were many responses that displayed good explanation but did not show high levels of synthesis. Many responses simply went through the actions of Erasmus, Loyola and a range of Popes explaining what each did, even if this was in a thematic approach. At a basic level there was sometimes comparison made at the end of each theme. This allowed some synthesis to be shown, with many arguing that in most instances the Popes were more important because of their influence and explaining this, particularly in terms of their authority. This was most notably seen when comparing the influence of Loyola with that of the Papacy.

The most common themes discussed were doctrine, spreading Catholicism, education and spiritual revival. In discussing doctrine many compared Erasmus and Cisneros with the Papacy and argued that although individuals were important, their influence was limited compared with the Papacy and the influence of Trent. However, some did argue that in both education and spiritual revival individuals were more important. These responses used the example of Loyola when discussing both themes but did note that his approval depended on the Papacy. Some responses also considered the influence of individuals such as Teresa d'Avila and John of the Cross in reviving spirituality but noted again their limitations.

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