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GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

HISTORY A (EXPLAINING THE MODERN WORLD)

J410

For first teaching in 2016

J410/13 Summer 2024 series

Contents

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 13 series overview

Candidates were well-prepared for this depth study on Personal Rule to Restoration 1629-1660 with Castles Form and Function. Most candidates used the stem of the question to address the question clearly and showed a wide range of knowledge pertaining to the questions asked. As would be expected, the quality of responses varied but the vast majority of candidates attempted all four questions, and very few seemed to have run out of time.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- addressed the question directly - read and acknowledged all parts of the question and answered accordingly - stayed within the date parameters of the question in their answers - identified two or more points in relation to the question and explained using relevant historical detail - wrote fluently so there was a clear line of argument, and so different points could be differentiated - evaluated one or more source (in Question 2) by addressing the provenance and commenting on the author's purpose or the validity of the source, based on relevant contextual knowledge - had a clear understanding of reasons for changes to the castle over the years (for Question 3) and could explain, using specific examples of alterations - used quotes or clear paraphrasing to illustrate points made in questions 2 and 4.	- didn't clearly refer to the questions when answering - misinterpreted the focus of the question (especially Question1) - wrote a narrative of related events but did not use this to address the question - identified points to address the question but did not explain them in sufficient detail - did not use the sources (in Question 2) to respond to the question asked, instead using contextual knowledge to explain why people didn't like Parliament - used simplistic and generic comments with regard to the nature or validity of the sources (in Question 2), which did not offer evaluation - mixed up individuals/events relating to the history of the castle (Question 3) - missed out one or more of the questions.

Section A overview

The first two questions demanded that the candidates demonstrate their understanding of the unit 'Personal Rule to Restoration'. The majority of candidates showed that they understood the broad sweep of the topic and the period. The most impressive answers showed a very good understanding of the impact of the massive changes the people of England lived through during this time. Candidates showed that they understood the need to give two distinct explanations for question one, although many misunderstood the question and so achieved only Level 2. For Question 2, most candidates made effective use of sources A and B, but made unwarranted assumptions about the thrust of Source C.

Question 1

Personal Rule to Restoration 1629–1660

1   Explain why new religious and political groups were seen as a threat from the 1640s.   **[10]**

To answer this question effectively, candidates were expected to identify 'new' radical groups and explain how they posed a threat to the established order. Those candidates who reached Levels 4 or 5 typically did so by identifying the Levellers, the Diggers and/or the Quakers as new radical groups and explained how their views on equality, land ownership or religious observance threatened the ruling classes, the landowning classes, or the church hierarchy. Many candidates reached Level 3 by identifying one or more radical group and identifying what their purpose or ideology was, and implying but not explicitly explaining who or how these groups and ideas threatened the establishment.

Where candidates did not move beyond Level 2 it was usually because they identified the radical groups but didn't explain their ideology or the threat they posed. Other answers which reached Level 2 identified long standing groups such as Puritans or discussed particular actions of groups within Parliament that posed problems for the King. These answers did not properly address the focus of the question.

Assessment for learning

Candidates should be reminded to address both parts of the question (in this case, the new radical groups, and the threat they posed). They should be reminded that they need to explain using specific historical knowledge about the topic in question, to go further than just identifying.

Exemplar 1

1		One reason new religious groups + political groups were seen as a threat was because they threatened the hierarchy. This is clearly seen in the group called the 'Levellers' - called so because they wanted a more level society. This group wanted all men to have the vote and for the ownership of land to be distributed more fairly They were especially opposed to ideas of monarchy as they did not believe one man should be above everyone else. This was a clear threat both to Parliamentarians and to Royalists as both sides wanted ol power concentrated in their caction rather than in the people as a whole. This These

This answer clearly identifies a new radical group and explains how and why their beliefs or actions threatened the establishment.

Question 2

2 Study **Sources A, B and C**.

'The monarchy was only restored because Parliament was so unpopular in 1659 and 1660.'

How far do **Sources A, B and C** convince you that this statement is correct?
Use the sources and your knowledge to explain your answer.   **[20]**

(🖊) Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology   **[5]**

The vast majority of candidates discussed all three sources separately and used them to address the question. They clearly understood that sources A and B supported the statement and were able to reach at least Level 2 by explaining this and supporting their answer with relevant source detail. Source C was done less well, with many making the assumption that since the people were celebrating the return of Charles Stuart, it must be because they all hated Parliament, which is not necessarily the case. This meant a lot of candidates achieved Level 2 but not Level 3. In order to get above Level 3, candidates were expected to evaluate one or more of the sources to address how convincing it was as evidence. This was done most effectively with source A.

Source A is clearly a criticism of Parliament and nearly every candidate made this inference and supported it with detail about taxation or being ruled by religious fanatics. Alternatively, some candidates argued that it didn't support the statement because the author acknowledged that 'men did not seem to care'. Both approaches were valid. Where candidates attempted to evaluate, this was the source with which it was most effectively done. These candidates tended to test what Booth wrote against their own knowledge of the issue (for example the 'religious fanatics' comment was supported by their knowledge of the actions of the Major Generals, and unfair taxation was supported by knowledge of the decimation tax). Others evaluated by focusing on the purpose of the author. They pointed out that the author was a royalist and had rebelled against parliament and used this to address the purpose of the source being to convince others to follow his lead. It should be noted that just saying that Booth was a Royalist or that he had rebelled was not enough to be credited with evaluation. It had to go on to explain why this mattered.

Source B was also clearly understood. Many candidates conflated the army with Parliament, for example, saying that by throwing things at the soldiers it proved people were unhappy with Parliament. This was credited as a valid approach, as the army was an instrument of Parliament. Others argued that people were more unhappy with the army than with Parliament and so used it to challenge the statement. This was also a valid approach. Very few attempted to evaluate Source B except by basic comments such as 'it is written as a diary so he wouldn't lie' which of course was not credited as evaluation.

Source C was understood to show the popularity of the new monarch but was used by candidates to argue this must mean that Parliament was hated and so proving the statement, which was not a valid response. Candidates tended not to attempt evaluation of this source except to say 'he was biased because he was a royalist' which was not credited as evaluation.

Exemplar 2

2 Source A clearly present the statement as fair. The ~~Source stat~~ source states that "Parliament demands more tax than we can afford" and that "Parliament forces people to 'share their ~~belig~~ beliefs' in terms of religion. Therefore, this source demonstrates how this person is clearly unhappy with the rule of Parliament in ~~a~~ England and the said they return. This is reinforced by the context of the time, where Oliver Cromwell had recently imposed unpopular policies - especially in the Rule of the Major Generals. He introduced a decimation tax on Royalists, were which was a tenth of their income and bankrupted many.

Cromwell also introduced a ban on many fun things on religious grounds such as Christmas and theatre. As a Royalist writing in 1657, memories of this would still be prevalent and cutting to the author who would likely have to pay the decimation tax. Therefore, the source is clearly convincing as it clearly presents someone who dislikes the rule of Parliament and so wishes for the Monarchy to return.

This answer clearly shows how Source A supports the statement and evaluates the veracity of the source by referring to Cromwell's use of the decimation tax against royalists to explain the author's anger towards parliament.

Assessment for learning

Most candidates approached this question in an effective way. However, it is worth repeating that candidates should have regular practice in handling contemporary sources and in exploring how to use the sources as evidence to address a particular statement. Responses which evaluate sources in a 'stock' way ('he's a royalist, so it is not convincing...') are unlikely to achieve the higher levels in this question. Instead, candidates should be encouraged to consider the author's purpose or motivation, and to think about what outcome the author might expect in response.

Section B overview

It was clear that the history of Kenilworth Castle had been taught well. Responses to both questions included detailed subject knowledge. Likewise, candidates were well-prepared for both styles of questions. Responses to Question 4 were particularly strong and students were able to use the sources to make valid, supported inferences.

Question 3

Castles: Form and Function c.1000–1750

3   Explain how Kenilworth Castle changed as a result of periods of instability and tension in England.   **[10]**

In this question, candidates were required to address how Kenilworth Castle changed due to periods of tension and instability in England. This required candidates to identify the time period and explore features of Kenilworth Castle that changed as a direct consequent of this.

Responses typically explored changes   during Henry II's, Simon De Montfort's and King John's periods. For instance, the changes King John made during the Baron's War and the changes the castle underwent because of the Civil War (see Exemplar 3). To achieve a Level 3 and above candidates were required to highlight a specific change to the Castle within the correct period. To achieve Level 4, candidates were required to develop their explanation and develop their point fully.

Some candidates' responses were limited to Level 2 or Level 3 because they identified a period of instability but did not then go on to explain the changes made in response to this instability. Likewise, responses that were more descriptive in nature (without an identified change) also achieved Level 2.

Some candidates explored the 'slighting of Kenilworth Castle' but did not explain what this meant; this could not be credited above a Level 1, as it did not address the question. Likewise, generic comments about changes to the Castle for example, 'the walls were reinforced' or 'it started out as a wooden motte and bailey castle' and so on, were not awarded higher than a Level 1.

Exemplar 3

| 3 | | One way Kenilworth changed as a result of instability and tension in England is during King John's reign in the early 1200s, in which there was rebellion against him by his barons. This meant that he created FO defenses in his royal castles. For example at Kenilworth, he added denesiie failures like arrow slits and mortiner towers which meant the castle could be defended. This made the castle into a royal stronghold |

This response shows how the candidate has explained how King John reinforced the defences of the castle in the context of the Baron's War .

Assessment for learning
A clear understanding of the chronology of the site really benefits the candidates, but this should be more than a superficial understanding. Many candidates know it changed from a baronial castle to a royal castle and to palatial home etc. but they didn't necessarily understand the historical reasons for that change. Without a more specific understanding of relevant events, candidates will find it hard to contextualise the changes.

Question 4

4   Study **Sources D and E**.

Which of these sources is more useful to a historian studying the history of Kenilworth Castle in the 1500s?   **[10]**

This question requires candidates to focus on source utility. Responses should include points supported by application of evidence from the source before supporting inferences made with detailed analysis. The question required students to consider how both sources were useful in learning more about the history of Kenilworth Castle during the 1500s.

Several responses demonstrated good technique. Many candidates were able to reach Level 4 by exploring Source D; this was done confidently. Candidates were able to make supported inferences from the source, using it to highlight how the Castle was residential, a place of luxury and entertainment, thereby using Source D to demonstrate that the Castle was no longer used for defensive purposes.

Candidates struggled to engage with Source E in the same way. Where engagement with Source E was accurate, candidates explored Kenilworth Castle's role as a status symbol during a time of peace: most typically they remarked on the large windows in Leicester's tower. They used this to support the inference that the castle was being used as a palatial home and connected this to their understanding of the time; that since these windows would be no use for defence, the country was going through a period of relative peace. Other permanent changes made to the Castle were mentioned. Where candidates did this, they achieved Level 5. However, this was not common. Candidates sometimes struggled to draw inferences from Source E that linked to the 1500s: instead, the slighting of Kenilworth Castle was referenced more frequently.

The nature of both sources understandably led candidates to discuss Dudley's tenure at Kenilworth and this was acceptable for both sources. However, there were candidates who used the sources to give a narrative about Dudley's relationship with Queen Elizabeth, rather than making inferences about the castle itself, (for example its purpose or function or how it was changed to suit the political climate). If the inference were not about the castle, it could not be credited.

It was pleasing to note that fewer candidates just dismissed either of the sources as 'useless'. There were still some who asserted that the photograph in Source E was 'more useful' because it was a 'visual representation' which is not a creditable inference.

Advice for centres

Candidates should be reminded to focus on making inferences on what the source tells us about the castle (its form and function), not just about the people connected to the castle.

All candidates should be encouraged to view the sources as a historian would, i.e. what can we work out from these sources? How do they help us?

Such possible inferences could include:

- Historians can infer that the castle was no longer needed as a fortress in a particular time period.

- Historians can infer the significance that people placed on the castle at that time.

- The source provides evidence about the purpose or function of the castle.

- The sources provide evidence about changes the castle went through.

The guidance in the specification provides a helpful set of prompts to help candidates consider the ways in which sources might be useful as evidence.

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