

**GCSE (9-1)**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY A (EXPLAINING THE MODERN WORLD)**

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**J410**

For first teaching in 2016

**J410/12 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 12 series overview

Candidates were well prepared for this depth study on The English Reformation c.1520–c.1550 with Castles: Form and Function. Responses were to a good standard and candidates demonstrated both knowledge and skill when handling questions. Most attempted all four questions and engaged with the sources provided to a high standard.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>focused on answering the set question, using knowledge as evidence to justify the points they made before linking back to the question</li><li>engaged well with content of sources provided; where responses were particularly strong, candidates engaged with the provenance and context, using these to draw conclusions and accurately evaluate the source content as needed</li><li>demonstrated detailed subject knowledge and an understanding of the demands of the question paper.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>did not focus on the demands of the question for example in Question 3 some candidates explored the history of Kenilworth Castle outside of periods of instability and tension</li><li>struggled to evaluate sources and instead provided generic 'stock' comments without linking back to the question and/or using their subject knowledge to reach a substantiated conclusion.</li></ul>

## Section A overview

Question 1 and Question 2 required candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of The English Reformation c.1520–c.1550. Most candidates' responded to each question with confidence, having demonstrated an understanding of the topic, the question demands and use of sources. Responses to Question 1 were particularly strong, with a high number of candidates achieving Level 4 or more. A high number of responses achieved Level 3 with candidates making good use of the sources.

### Question 1

#### **The English Reformation c.1520–c.1550**

**1** Explain why the Church was so important in England in the 1520s.

**[10]**

Question 1 allowed candidates to demonstrate their knowledge on the role played by the Catholic Church and its significance in Tudor society, before Henry's Break from Rome.

On the whole, responses included a range of valid points, including the role of monasteries and the significance of the Church within its local community. However, where some responses were limited was in their judgements of how the role played by the Catholic Church only served to increase its importance. For example, some candidates demonstrated a firm understanding of the wealth of the Church but they often fell short in explaining how its wealth led to its increased importance. However, there were a strong number of Level 5 responses where candidates confidently explored points such as the significance of religion in the 1520s, the role of employment and care provided by the Church, and its political influence before explaining them accurately in relation to the question.

Candidates who did not achieve beyond a Level 2 gave responses that were more descriptive in nature, without giving a clear point. Likewise, where responses did not move above Level 3, candidates either listed a range of valid points and/or did not develop them by providing a valid explanation. An example of this would be a candidate providing an initial point about the wealth of the Church followed by an explanation of the role of the Catholic Church in planning feast days. Such responses did not follow a coherent structure and therefore were credited as Level 3 for raising valid points but not explaining them to a Level 4 standard.

## Exemplar 1

1	A	In 1920's England, the church dictated lives. It owned 25% of the land and acted as a safe place for people to be with God. New introductions to catholic perspectives such as indulgences, relics and tithes (10% of income) helped develop the church into becoming a strong place of worship. and <del>understand</del> <del>to</del> This meant that ideas and objects closely related to religion brought people closer to God, <del>and</del> and spread its impacts, enabling deep relationships with religion to be made. Because new aspects of religion were introduced, it made people excited and intrigued to develop their understanding.
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Exemplar 1 is an extract from a response that achieved Level 2 - it contained a description of the Catholic Church and included points that were linked to the issue in the question. However, it did not identify a clear point that states why the Church was important. Instead, it contains descriptive information about points that link to the role of the Church.

## Question 2

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

'Henry VIII and his officials tried to persuade, **not** force, people to accept religious changes between 1534 and 1546.'

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]

Broadly, candidates engaged well with Question 2. Candidates were confident in engaging with the sources provided and there were some excellent responses.

Most candidates were able to engage with the sources in an appropriate manner. Responses demonstrated that candidates were able to comprehend the sources and use them to respond to statement on whether Henry VIII and his officers tried to persuade, not force, people to accept religious changes. Responses that demonstrated this achieved Level 2 and 3 depending on whether the content of one, two or three sources had been explored to a satisfactory level and linked back to the question.

Candidate responses included: supporting the statement through Source A with the language used by Cranmer to set a 'friendly and forgiving example'; contradicting the statement with Source B and the punishment it outlined for heretics or, alternatively, highlighting examples of both persuasion and force in Source C (however, most responses used Source C to challenge the statement overall). A significant number of responses engaged to a high standard with all three sources provided, so a high number of candidates achieved Level 3, often to the upper end of the level. However, there were some responses where candidates simply analysed the sources provided without linking back to the question. Where candidates did this, they did not achieve beyond a Level 1.

To achieve a Level 4 and beyond, candidates were required to evaluate the source(s) using its provenance, purpose, context or wider subject knowledge. This was something candidates found more challenging to do well. Attempts to evaluate the sources were made however, these were found to be generic and, were more often than not, examples of 'stock' evaluation. Candidates provided valid points but did not link the points they were making back to an assessment of how convincing this then made the sources of the statement. For example, a number of responses referenced the execution of Thomas More in 1535 after exploring the content of Source A. However, they did not link it back to an assessment of how and why this made Source A less convincing of the statement. This was a common issue that arose. So, where candidates tried to evaluate two or three of the sources they often only succeeded in evaluating one to the required standard: therefore achieving the top of Level 4.

In Level 5 responses, valid evaluation was typically provided for Source A and Source C. Candidates argued that Cranmer's words (therefore the source) could be perceived as unconvincing due to events at the time, e.g. Henry's response to the Pilgrimage of Grace. With Source C, candidates argued the Anne Askew's role as a Protestant reformer meant its content may be exaggerated and therefore less convincing of the statement.

On the whole, there was clear evidence of accurate and detailed subject knowledge, but candidates struggled to link this back to the question and use it to evaluate how this made the sources more or less convincing of the statement. However, a number of responses did achieve this therefore achieving Level 4 or Level 5.

## Exemplar 2

		Source B does not fully convince me that Henry VIII was not forceful.
		The source talks about Henry VIII new law being passed which dismisses the idea of supporting a religion against Henry VIII and threatens "Heretics" with harsh punishments such as "torture" and, "execution by burning." By going to such extreme lengths of torture, it does not give people much choice to disagree with Henry, therefore initiating the idea that his will for change was a forceful act. However, the source very slightly convinces me otherwise.
		This extract was taken from the <del>1534</del> 1539 'Act of Six Articles' which diminished the ten articles and stripped ideas of diversity in religion. But, Henry VIII claims it was to 'achieve unity' and, 'protect his people', giving some hope to readers that there was an underlying cause to help others not just the monarchy. However this suggestive idea is shortly diminished <sup>as</sup> , in 1534, Henry VIII passed the 'Act of Supremacy', allowing him to become head of the Catholic church and get his desired divorce. Therefore this shows he only wanted to reform Britain for his own benefit, done in a forceful way.

Exemplar 2 is part of a response that achieved Level 5 for a number of reasons. More clearly, it links its assessment of Source B to the given statement, embedding its use of the source to support the inferences it makes which are valid. In addition to this, the candidate uses their wider knowledge of the Act of Supremacy to question the source and reach a conclusion on its ability to convince them of the statement. The response had already achieved Level 4 by evaluating Source A; the analysis of Source B took this response to Level 5.

### Assessment for learning



Most candidates attempted to evaluate the sources using the provenance, context, or their wider knowledge. However, it is important to highlight that the quality of evaluation often did not meet the criteria of Level 4. It is important that evaluation is not overly simplistic. Where this is the case, it is unlikely to be awarded Level 4.

## 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 candidates 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. 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.

## 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 candidates 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.

## Exemplar 3

4	B	
		Source E is more useful than source D. Source D gives a great description and detailing on the interior of Kenilworth. For example 'life-size portraits' and the 'Items of Kitchenware'. This source gives us a great understanding on the lives of those living and visiting Kenilworth, (Robert Dudley and Queen Elizabeth) whilst also <del>gives</del> providing us with a description of how the interior would have been decorated and displayed as a luxury palace, making it helpful.
		However, in source E, it is a photograph taken recently of the remains of Kenilworth Castle. Source E gives a more structural presentation and visual representation of how 'Leicester's Building' (built by Robert Dudley for Queen Elizabeth) would have looked. For a historian studying the history of Kenilworth, this source is more useful <del>the</del> because the historian can interpret their own view based on the image. More detail and extent of the luxury that the palace once was can be seen.

Exemplar 3 achieved Level 4. While it is not the strongest response, the candidate has made a valid inference from the source before using the quote to support it. However, the point made by the candidate is vague. They have made a valid comment about the value of Source D in providing an understanding of the lives of individuals who lived in the Castle, but they have not stipulated what inference can be made i.e. the importance of Kenilworth as a symbol of power or the function of the Castle as a place of entertainment.

On the whole, the standard of writing is not strong. Therefore, the response achieved bottom of Level 4 with an overall mark of 7.

### Assessment for learning



It is important that candidates explore the usefulness of both sources and use these to make valid, supported inferences. To achieve top of Level 4 and Level 5 (depending on the number of points raised), candidates should demonstrate wider subject knowledge.

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