

**GCSE (9-1)**

**Examiners' report**

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

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**J410**

For first teaching in 2016

**J410/09 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 9 series overview

This paper examines the thematic study of Power: Monarchy and Democracy in Britain, c.1000 to 2014. It requires candidates to display their understanding of change and continuity across a broad sweep of British history, including a significant event. Knowledge is assessed through four questions asking for recall, causation, significance and analysis of an issue over two eras specified by the syllabus.

The examination focuses on Assessment Objectives 1 and 2, demonstrating knowledge and understanding as well as explaining and analysing historical events.

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 command words in the questions and of the broader demands of the different question types</li><li>• recalled, selected and deployed specific information relevant to the questions, and used this to demonstrate understanding of the concept in the questions</li><li>• effectively managed their time during the hour-long examination to achieve suitable coverage of the questions according to their demand and the mark tariffs.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• used the questions as prompts for their knowledge rather than focusing on the questions' specific demands</li><li>• did not draw their examples from the period or date range specified in the question</li><li>• offered narrative answers that described events rather than using the material to answer the question.</li></ul>

## Question 1

1 Describe **two** arguments used to demand the right for women to vote in the early 1900s.

[4]

This question was well answered by a large number of candidates. Many of these did so in a time-efficient manner that allowed them to focus more fully on the more challenging questions later in the paper (see Exemplar 1).

Most candidates attempted to offer two issues relevant to the struggle for women's suffrage and then show why these could be used as arguments for why women deserved the vote. Popular issues raised by candidates included work undertaken by women in the First World War, the participation of women in local elections, the ownership of property and the payment of taxes. Candidates were given 1 mark for describing the activities of a group like the NUWSS, but were only awarded the development mark if they offered a valid reason why those activities highlighted an argument why women deserved the vote (for example that the NUWSS were law-abiding and this showed how reasonable their claims were).

Answers which made general comments about equality of fairness but which were not clearly rooted in the period in the question were credited with a general mark only.

### Exemplar 1

1)	Women could already vote in local elections which proved they could handle the responsibility of the vote. They paid the same taxes as men so they also deserved equal representation.
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Question 1 can be answered in a relatively short format and some candidates were highly adept at doing so, which gave them greater time to spend on the higher tariff questions, especially Question 4.

Exemplar 1 is a good example of such an approach; the candidate addressed two valid issues with supporting detail showing why each was a valid argument why women deserved the vote, and was credited with full marks.

## Question 2

2 Explain why Tudor monarchs needed to have good relations with Parliament.

[8]

While most candidates understood the demands of Question 2 – the requirement to offer two explained points – this was less well answered than Question 1 because a significant number of responses offered material that was not rooted in the Tudor period. Common examples that could not be credited included references to John and the barons (in a period when Parliament did not exist) and of Charles I and his relationship with Parliament. As these were not uncommon responses, centres might wish to address issues of chronology with their candidates when preparing future cohorts.

For this question, examiners were looking for candidates to identify a valid aim or need from a Tudor monarch (or the Tudor monarchy generally) and how a good relationship with Parliament was important in allowing them to achieve this. Commonly seen examples included Henry VIII's need for funding with wars against France and Scotland, for support during the 'Break with Rome' (for instance through the Act of Supremacy), and Elizabeth's need for support to deal with threats to her rule from uprisings, Mary Queen of Scots and the Armada. Candidates who were successful in doing this with one example were credited in Level 3 (one explanation, for 5 or 6 marks depending on quality) and those who were to do so more than once could access Level 4.

As with Question 1, answers that were too generalised and could not clearly be seen by examiners as rooted in the Tudor period were unable to move out of Level 1.

## Question 3

3 How significant was government control in the two world wars of the 1900s?

[14]

Question 3 requires candidates to assess the impact of an event, issue, individual or group (in this case government control during the two world wars). Candidates who were able to explain why government control in this period resulted in change were credited in Level 3 (and examiners had some latitude to award marks depending on the quality of the explanation(s) offered) while those who were able to assess the significance of that change were credited in Level 4.

A large number of candidates possessed a good understanding of government control in this period and were able to select and deploy relevant examples, most commonly based around conscription, rationing or the greater government powers during these wars such as the Defence of the Realm Act. In Level 3, explanations often focused on how these controls contributed to victory in the world wars, and in Level 4 analysis of significance often examined how extensive these changes were (for instance how the controls of DORA affected everyone in British society, accompanied with examples of this). Some candidates also argued that government control was significant as it led to a greater role in war work for women and so led to a turning point in the struggle for enfranchisement.

Although some very strong responses to this question were seen, some candidates were limited to Level 2; while they were able to identify and describe government controls like conscription, they did not make a valid comment on why this represented a change or had impact at the time. Less frequently, candidates attempted to consider wider issues involving the British government in the period leading to the Second World (for example Chamberlain and Appeasement) but such responses were not focused sufficiently on the question set to be credited.

## Exemplar 2

anti-war messages being sent to the people. The government control during the wars also had a long term impact and so can be seen as significant. After the wars, the post war consensus was that generally peoples lives improved under government control. ~~that the welfare state~~ The world wars and the governments actions of having greater control of peoples lives lasted long after the wars and was only really attacked under Thatcher.

Most candidates achieving Level 4 (assessing the significance of government control during the two world wars) did so by considering the extensive influence of government power at the time or by considering the long-term 'reach' of those powers. Exemplar 2 is very effective at the latter method, and forms part of an answer that was awarded full marks. In this extract, the candidate demonstrates how the government's increased role in society was retained for decades through the 'post-war consensus', showing a clear understanding of the concept of significance that was credited highly.

## Misconception



Some candidates attempted to address Question 3 by claiming that other issues in the 20th century were more significant than government control in the two world wars. This is not a valid way to answer the question; candidates' answers should be focused on the subject of question rather than attempt to consider significance relative to other issues.

## Question 4\*

4\* 'Between 1000 and 1800, the rulers of Britain were able to keep control of the country.'

How far do you agree?

[24]

As with previous years, Question 4 requires candidates to consider the validity of a statement across two of the three study periods and offer explained examples of how the statement could be both supported and challenged. Three explained examples covering both sides of the argument and both time periods gives access to Level 5. In Levels 4 and 5, an additional mark was credited to candidates who were able to offer a 'clinching argument' (see Exemplar 3).

The thrust of the question was understood well by most candidates, who were able to offer valid examples both of instances where a ruler's control was successfully maintained (or increased) and where a ruler's control was diminished (or lost).

Explicit comment on the extent of control was required for examiners to credit candidates with explanation, which opened up the higher levels of the mark scheme. Answers which identified (and described) relevant examples but without specific comment on rulers' control could not move from Level 2.

Common examples used to support the statement in the question were drawn from William I, Edward I, Henry VIII and Elizabeth. Frequently, this material was structured around how rulers dealt effectively with rebellions such as the 'Harrying of the North' and the Pilgrimage of Grace. For challenging the statement, candidates frequently used examples from Aethelred, John, Richard II, Charles I and James II. These examples usually centred around a specific event that caused the ruler to lose some or all of their control. Answers using material from the 'modern' period were rare, but as this was outside the scope of this question, this material was not credited.

This is now a mature specification and in general, candidates are now very well prepared by centres to approach this question. Good time management is key as this has allowed candidates to spend the 25-30 minutes required to construct a detailed response.

## Exemplar 3

		In conclusion, Strong kings who worked
		well with Parliament and their nobles between
		1000 and 1800 were able to keep control
		successfully. However, weak kings who constantly
		conflicted with nobles and Parliament like King
		Charles I and King John did not keep control of
		the country therefore disagreeing with the
		statement.

Exemplar 3 is an extract from a response; it contains a 'clinching argument' which gains an additional mark for candidates who achieve either Level 4 or Level 5. In this case this argument was effectively structured around a common theme that caused rulers to lose control – conflict with nobles and Parliament – which the candidate gives relevant examples of. This was the final paragraph of an answer that was credited at the top of Level 5. Any valid, comparative and substantiated judgement was credited by examiners as a 'clinching argument'.

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