

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

HISTORY A

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in History A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y319/01 Summer 2025 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 responses 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 Y319/01 series overview

Y319 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:
- showed a clear understanding of the views of the two interpretations in relation to the question - were able to use contextual knowledge to test the interpretations, linking that knowledge directly to the interpretations using evaluative words - were able to consider both the strengths and the limitations of the interpretations - covered the whole period in a balanced way in the essay questions - adopted a thematic approach - made links and comparisons between aspects of the topics - supported their arguments with precise and relevant arguments - reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question.	- showed a limited understanding of one or both of the interpretations - did not go beyond a basic explanation of part of the interpretations - did not link any contextual knowledge directly to the interpretation and therefore did not evaluate the interpretation - adopted a chronological rather than a thematic approach in the essay questions - did not make links or comparisons even if events from different parts of the period were discussed in the same paragraph - did not cover the whole period - did not focus on the precise wording of the question - made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

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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.

Section A in Paper Y319 is focused on the effect of the New Deal on the position of African Americans.

Question 1

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

Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of how far the New Deal improved the position of African Americans. [30]

This question was very well answered with most candidates having a good knowledge of the New Deal and its impact on African Americans. The main arguments of both passages were understood well. Candidates could see that Passage A took a more negative view of the failure of the New Deal to improve the economic position of African Americans, while Passage B had a more positive argument about its social and cultural impacts. There is no requirement to mention any other historians' views in relation to the New Deal.

Successful responses used detailed knowledge of the key acts and agencies during the New Deal period, and showed a good awareness of the restrictions that Roosevelt was working under, and that much of the progress made in the New Deal did not apply to the majority of African Americans who worked in agriculture and domestic service. The most successful responses used knowledge to evaluate the views in the passages, for example the Social Security Act was used to support the argument in Passage A as it excluded so many African Americans and Roosevelt's Black Cabinet was used as a positive change to support the argument in Passage B. Strong responses effectively used evaluative language such as 'supported by' and 'challenged by.' Less successful responses simply explained the views in the passages and often used phrases such as 'fails to mention', i.e. evaluating by omission instead of directly challenging the arguments of the historians. There was also a marked tendency to pick out brief references to earlier and later periods in the passages and then write at length about government actions outside of the New Deal such as positive changes made in the Reconstruction Era of the 1860s and 70s and the role of the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 60s. There are also still a few candidates who write about the provenance of the passages when this is not relevant to their evaluation and in this case the fact that Zinn had strong political views was held against him.

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 most successful answers will test a hypothesis and reach a supported judgement.

Question 2*

- 2*** To what extent did the aims of the campaigners for African American civil rights remain the same in the period from 1865 to 1992? **[25]**

This was the most popular of the essay questions but also the least well answered. Stronger responses often argued that the aims did change after the 1960s when the Civil Rights Act had ended the Jim Crow system of segregation in the South and the Voting Rights Act had achieved more political rights. There were some very successful responses which adopted themes such as social, economic and political aims and looked at the change from more integrationist campaigns including individuals such as Martin Luther King and groups such as the NAACP to a focus on Black Power later in the period. African American individuals and groups were often prominent and there was also some impressive knowledge shown of less well-known figures such as Ida B Wells and her campaign against lynching in the early period. There were also effective references to white groups such as the Radical Republicans in the early period and white individuals such as President Lyndon Johnson in the later period.

However, many less successful responses showed a lack of understanding of the focus of the question and often concentrated on methods rather than aims or used what looked like a formulaic answer on the changes to civil rights themselves over the period. Sometimes responses that focused on the aims of campaigners took a chronological approach; this made it hard to achieve synthesis and sometimes timing problems led to a lack of focus on the later period.

Exemplar 1

2	African American civil rights campaigners focused on many social, economic and political issues throughout the period, with different groups advocating for different outcomes depending on the circumstances in which they found themselves. Due to shifting flows of change and continuity, it is clear that their aims did not remain the same across the period.
	Socially The aims of Civil Rights campaigners with regard to social issues changed dramatically over the course of the period. During the Gilded Age, campaigners such as Ida B. Wells protested to stop the very real threat of lynching in the South, with her pamphlets being distributed throughout the 1890s to raise awareness. This displays how, at the begin beginning of the period, campaigners simply aimed to be treated as human, demanding an end to sex murder across the South. Whilst this did continue into the 1900s, with the failure of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill (1922) and the rise of the second KKK causing alarm, gradually lynching began to diminish, with focus shifting to full desegregation and equality under the law in the 1940s and 50s. The work of campaigners like Martin Luther King helped to encourage the desegregation of schools (<i>Brown v. Board</i>, 1954) and eventually full integration (Civil Rights Act, 1964).

This displays a shift away from campaigning for survival towards demanding full equality. Finally, the work of campaigners such as Malcolm X developed a new social aim - no longer was integration the goal, instead, the BPP advocated social separation and Black Pride. This, therefore, displays shifting social goals for African-American civil rights campaigners.

This trend is similarly reflected in the economic aims of campaigners. During the Gilded Age, Booker T. Washington encouraged financial betterment, with African Americans ~~encouraged~~ seeking integration into middle class white society. This is characterised by the 'Tuskegee Institute'. This continued into the ~~early 1940s~~ ^{← Great Depression in the 1930s} 1940s, with many still advocating economic betterment to improve the black position. However, By the 1940s, African Americans joined the US Army in droves ^{in WW2}, hoping to increase their opportunities that way. This did not materialise, however, and 100 years after emancipation, continuity had gripped the economic position of African Americans. Therefore, the aims of ~~the~~ their campaigners changed. Malcolm X advocated for 'economic independence', choosing to ~~detach~~ advocate for African Americans to detach from the white economic system. This displays a major

change in the aims of key campaigners. Into the latter ~~last~~ portion of the period, affirmative action became a pivotal demand of campaigners, with the *Grove City v. Bell* (1986) debacle displaying its controversy. By the end of the period, economic aims had arguably changed the least - yet they still changed drastically. Focus shifted from self betterment to demanding equal pay, and despite some aims (such as building up assets) remaining, they had ~~also~~ overall changed dramatically.

Political aims of campaigners changed drastically over the period. Following the ~~pass~~ ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870, African Americans saw large ~~activis~~ excitement for political participation, with the election of the first black congressman Hiram Revels. However, post Hayes-Tilden Compromise⁽¹⁸⁷⁷⁾ saw a regression, with campaigners such as W. E. B. Dubois now fighting for an end to voter suppression in the South. This continued across the first half of the 20th century, displaying the shift in aims from electing African Americans to simply allowing them to vote. However, post-1965 Voting Rights Act, aims shifted again to electing African Americans, with Shirley Chisholm and Jesse Phillips running for President throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Overall, the aims of campaigners

		politically changed drastically over the period, with the benefits of Reconstruction being lost, and aims changing accordingly.
		In conclusion, the aims of campaigners for African American civil rights did not stay the same across the period. Instead, they changed considerably, reacting to the social, economic and political realities of each time period.

This response is an example of a focused and thematic Level 5 essay which lacks the depth for Level 6. For example, the final section on political aims is quite brief and says little about the middle of the period and the political aims of those who campaigned successfully for the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

Question 3*

- 3* 'The Federal Government was the most important factor limiting the development of trade union and labour rights in the period from 1865 to 1992.'

How far do you agree?

[25]

This was the least popular of the essay questions but there were some very strong responses. These took a thematic approach that compared the role of the Federal Government with that of employers, economic trends, and divisions within the unions themselves. These essays were able to note that in periods such as the 1930s and the 1960s the Federal Government played a more positive role without drifting into a focus on whether the Federal Government helped or hindered. The role of the Supreme Court was used as part of the Federal Government or as a counter argument.

Less successful responses were often imbalanced with their focus on the 1890s and 1980s with Presidents Cleveland and Reagan very prominent. Some focused only on the role of the Federal Government with no comparison to other factors.

Misconception



This question was focused on the factors limiting the development of trade union and labour rights and not on whether the Federal Government opposed or supported them, which was the question in 2024.

Question 4*

- 4* 'Women in America gained greater gender equality in the period before the end of the Second World War than after it.'

How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1865 to 1992?

[25]

This was a very popular question and generally well answered with themes such as political, economic, reproductive, and social rights used effectively to make comparisons across the period. Many responses concluded that only in political rights were real gains made before 1945. Many used statistics effectively from across the period to make their case and were very familiar with concepts such as separate spheres.

Less successful responses tried to answer this as a turning point essay. These focused on the role of the Second World War itself with some written about the early period and then the post-war period; this made direct comparison difficult. There was also a tendency to start with the 19th Amendment in 1920 and/or end with the Civil Rights Act in 1964 which led to unbalanced coverage of the period. And although the campaigners for women's rights could be made relevant, the question was focused on the gaining of rights rather than the campaigning for rights.

Assessment for learning



Remind candidates to provide evidence to support any comparisons or contrasts made, otherwise their argument becomes assertion and is unlikely to reach the higher levels.

Exemplar 2

4)	Plan:		
	Economic	Social	Political
	- 6 mil new women (mil fired after)	- Love v Wade 73	- 19th Amendment + 18th politicisation
	- F.L.S.A + NIRA excluded	- Flappers criticized	- Only 1950 equal
	- 20% unequal paid	- NOW vs separate spheres	- no. of ♀ and ♂ votes
	- Equal Pay Act	- Sanger → pill	- ERA failure + NOW brought up again
	↳ Schultz v Wheatstons	→ Comstock overturned	- more political representation
		- Hyde.	
The ^{period before the} Second World War brought about significant foundations for the advancement of gender equality in terms of political, social and economic rights. However, these were only foundations, and the most significant impact was achieved in post WWII, as the impact was long term.			
Economically, the second World War significantly improved equality as 6 million new women joined industrial work, aided by the Rosie the Riveter campaign suggesting increased federal support for women's rights in the work place. Similarly, women like Olive Ann Beech created aircraft industries, further showing an increase in women's industrial work, which prior to WWII was seen as a "man's job" due to the concept of separate spheres. However, the impact of pre WWII could be seen as			

limited as 2 million women were fired post the war, further supporting the concept of a stereotypical women's job. ~~Post war~~ The period post WWII brought about more significant economic change as the Equal Pay Act of 1963 passed by Kennedy echoed back to FDR's Fair Labour Standards Act of 1938, which excluded domestic servants - mostly women. Furthermore, the Schultz vs Wheaton Glass Co ruling ^{of 1970} further built on the foundations of pre WWII, as ~~as~~ there was a 20% wage gap in male and female teachers before the war. The ruling emphasised the ~~the~~ concept of not being able to change job titles just to pay a woman less. This was a significant change from the post civil war period where women were typically just domestic workers and most middle class white women only worked in Ladies' Union Societies to help fighting soldiers. Furthermore, the creation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 1964 aimed to decrease discrimination in employment, similarly seen with the National Organisation for Women's rally in the 1970's campaigning for equal workplace opportunities. This suggests that ~~as~~ a significant economic impact was only observed post WWII, as before the war, ~~most~~ ^{most} women were subjected to domestic work and pay gaps, contrasted to the growing ~~and~~ industrial work of women post WWII.

Socially, ~~the~~ the period post WWII could be seen as fairly limited ~~because~~ ^{as seen} with the flappers of the 1920's. They were severely criticised due to ~~high~~ traditionalism, contrasted to the radicalism of the 1960's. They achieved more success in the erosion of the separate spheres due to the burning of the bras and makeup and, although criticised, not as severely as the flappers. Similarly the Roe v Wade ruling of 1973 ~~is~~ shows much more success in terms of abortions than pre world war II. Despite the overturning of the Comstock laws in 1938, legalising ~~the~~ the advertisement of birth control in the mail, only white middle class women could usually afford birth control, leading to many dangerous back-street abortions of immigrant and African American women. Despite Margaret Sanger creating the first legal birth control clinic in 1923, it wasn't until the emergence of the pill in the 1960's that birth control began to be widely used. ~~the~~ Similarly, the repeal of the Sheppard Towner Act in 1928 led to the cutting of federal funding for maternity, reducing the amount of social autonomy a woman had. The issue of infant funding and education could be seen ^{as early as} post civil war with Jane Addams' creation of the Hull House, leading to 50 institutions

opened by 1895, aimed to improve infant facilities. However, progress could only start to be seen post WWII with the erosion of separate spheres, where the father and mother shared house responsibilities due to dual incomes. Therefore, ~~the~~ the gap of social gender equality ~~before~~ before WWII was limited due to the fact that many of the attempts at the erosion of separate spheres were severely criticised. However, the attempts did ~~form~~ form a foundation for the most significant impact post WWII, which was more long-term.

Politically, it can be argued that ~~pre~~ pre WWII gained the most gender equality due to the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920. However, the ~~long-term~~ direct impact of it was limited as it was only in the 1950s that the number of female and male votes were roughly equal. Furthermore, women representation in government ~~pre~~ pre WWII was limited as only 2 state governors were female in the New Deal, contrasted to ~~19~~ 19 out of 100 major city mayors being female by 1992. Despite the proportion still being unequal, it shows an increase in women working for the government. Similarly, the National Women's Political Caucus was formed ~~in~~ in the 1970's in order to

raise the number of women running for election, successfully leading to Geraldine Ferraro running for Vice President. This ^{significantly} ~~was~~ contrasted ~~to the early 1980s~~ with the lack of women in federal government before the 20th century. However, the growing ~~political~~ politicisation of women during the temperance movement, like the Women's Crusade and the WCTU, and the campaigns for suffrage lay a foundation for ~~the~~ the growth of the women's political voice. This was similarly seen with Alice Paul and the 1st drafting of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923, allowing NOW to re-campaign for it in the 1960's. Despite the lack of its ratification, it further emphasises the foundations that were laid pre WWII. Therefore, ~~even though~~ before the end of the second world war, fairly limited impact was achieved, however the period was significant in setting the foundations for the growth in political gains post WWII. These gains ~~were~~ had a more long-term impactful effect, hence greater political gender equality was achieved post WWII.

To conclude, the period before the end of the second world war was significant in laying foundations for social, political and economic

		gains. However, due to the large support of the
		concept of separate spheres, limited impact was
		achieved was due to low voting numbers and
		divided male and female workforce. Therefore,
		the period post WWII brought about the
		most significant long-term change, by building
		off the foundations that the pre-WWII period
		created.

This response is an example of a focused and thematic essay with good examples from across the period which has just enough synthesis to get into the bottom of Level 6.

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