

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

HISTORY A

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in History A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y306/01 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 Y306/01 series overview

Y306 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 interpretation through evaluative words - were able to consider both the strengths and limitations of both interpretations using contextual knowledge - covered the whole period in a balanced way - adopted a thematic approach - made links and comparisons between aspects of the topic - explained the links and comparisons - supported their arguments with precise and relevant examples - 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 interpretation - did not link any contextual knowledge directly to the interpretation and therefore did not evaluate the interpretation - adopted a chronological rather than thematic approach - 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 Y306 is focused on the threat posed by the Western Rebellion.

Question 1

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

Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the threat posed by the Western Rebellion to the government. [30]

Responses that focused on the overall view of the two interpretations about the threat posed by the Western Rebellion produced more convincing responses than those that considered limited phrases from the interpretations that did not always focus on the threat. A number of responses simply explained what the two interpretations said about the Rebellion, others explained the interpretations and used contextual knowledge to aid the explanation, however these approaches do not take the response to the higher levels. In order to access the higher levels, the interpretations need to be evaluated, that means giving a value to the interpretation and its view about the threat. Responses can argue, in basic terms, that the interpretation is either right or wrong and then link their contextual knowledge to this statement to support their point.

More sophisticated responses went beyond this simple approach and developed their evaluation using a range of evaluative words and phrases. Most did see that Interpretation A suggested the rebellion was a serious threat and were often able to refer the number of battles taken to put the rebellion down, however there was much disagreement over the size of the rebellion with many confusing it with Kett's. Responses also argued that the interpretation was valid given the violence of the rising, noting the murder of Hellyons and the cry of 'Kill the Gentlemen', whilst also commenting on the numbers killed in the final battle at Sampford Courtenay. There was some discussion of the siege of Exeter, but a large number thought it fell to the rebels.

In evaluating Interpretation B most identified the argument that it had little chance of success and noted that its suppression was delayed because of other unrest that was put down in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire before Russell proceeded to advance and that he was cautious, some citing his retreat to Honiton. This was often added to with responses commenting on how the situation in the West escalated because of the behaviour of men like Carew and this made suppression more difficult. Most argued that Interpretation B was correct to suggest that it had little chance of success because of the nature of the demands and lack of support outside Devon and Cornwall and that once reinforcements arrived, most notably mercenaries, it was suppressed. In arguing either view was more valid there was much contextual knowledge that could be used, but what mattered was the quality of evaluation and focus on threat.

Exemplar 1

1	Passage A and Passage B provide varying arguments in explaining the level of threat the Western Rebellion posed to the Government. Passage A by M. Stogle argues that the Western Rebellion was very close to 'succeeding in its goals in the West country and even in the very seat of government'. This shows a clear viewpoint that the Western rebellion posed a clear threat to the government. This differs from the interpretation provided by Passage B as this states that the rebellion did not threaten the government and that it 'never had a real chance of forcing the government to make concessions. Passage A is correct in arguing that the initial government response led by Russell was inadequate which led to an increase in threat. The passage states that 'Forces under Russell's command... were much weaker than appreciated'. We know this to be true as when Russell was sent in to deal with the rebellion he only had an army of 1700 compared to the 6000 man rebel army leaving his forces outnumbered by more than 3 to 1. The forces being 'weaker than previously appreciated' also links to the vast communication problems faced by the government. Somerset often did not know what was going on or what forces both sides had, which led to Russell being sent in under manned. Passage A is also correct in arguing that the Western Rebellion posed a threat to Tudor
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1		government as it worsened the 'factional struggle that raged in the capital'. We know this to be true as there was a large factional rivalry between Somerset Seymour, the then regent to Edward VI and, and John Dudley, the Earl of Warwick. This was due to the fact that after Henry VIII died he intended to leave a Regency council council to rule whilst Edward VI was a minor. However, ^{Seymour} Seymour took the position for himself to be the sole regent which angered others on the Regency council such as Dudley. This led to Dudley criticising any mistakes that Seymour made in his response to the Western Rebellion to undermine his position as regent. This shows a clear increase in threat posed by the western rebellion as it clearly highlighted weakness in the government. However, Passage A is incorrect in arguing that the 'rebellion (was close) to catch fire right across the south of England and Wales' we know this may have been unlikely due to the response of Taunton and Bristol in the government response. Then At the time the Government lacked money to buy support so asked the Towns of Taunton and Bristol for money to buy Italian mercenaries and the two towns provided the donations. This is crucial as these were the next two towns geographically that the rebels would have been taken. If they were providing funds for mercenaries to suppress the rebellion it is very unlikely they would have joined in the rebellion as suggested in Passage A.
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1	Passage B is correct also argues that Russell's force was 'small and inadequate' which we have already established to be true as his 1700 were outnumbered outnumbered more than 3 to 1. Passage B is also correct in arguing that the Western Rebellion was suppressed so weakly was due to the context of the time. Passage B mentions 'Various rebellions of the Commonwealth to the East and North', we know this to be true as England was taking part in the 'Rough Wooing' of Scotland which meant that many men were stationed in the North. There was also the Kett Rebellion of July 1549 which required resources and also widespread discontent as 1549 was known as the year of great commotion. This increased the duration of the Western Rebellion as stated in Passage B which suggests it may have posed a threat to the government. Passage B is also correct in stating that disagreements between Rebels reduced the threat. The Passage states that the 'Rebels were more concerned ... by controlling the West country'. This is supported by the fact that 4000 rebels continued to lay siege to Exeter whilst 2000 rebels aimed to March on London. This came in response of the Siege of Exeter taking too long which was slowing the momentum of rebellion. This clearly reduced threat as suggested by Passage B as it gave time for the Government to Respond. However, Passage B is incorrect in arguing that 'the leaders now have failed'.
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1		We know this to be untrue as it was the Leader and Gentry Soldier, Humphrey Arundell who had proposed the Siege on London with the forces, Showing he was not threatened by the prospect. It was instead more likely by the 4000 Common Supporters who was refused to March on London, Their motives for this is correctly spend speculated by Passage B as it refers to the memory of 'Blackheath 1497'. This was an event of the Cornish Rebellion where the 15,000 men marched on London and 1000 died at Deptford Bridge. This would discourage others from Cornwall wanting to March on London thus reducing threat as mentioned in Passage B. Overall, whilst both Passage A and Passage B provide strong arguments, e.g. Both mention Russell's lack of men initially impacted on the threat posed by Western. Passage B provides a more convincing argument to the threat threat posed to the government by the Western Rebellion, whilst Passage A did explore the justification caused by the rebellion this is overwhelmed by the Argument of Passage B that poor leadership of the Rebels allowed the government to respond effectively when they had the chance, the eliminating any potential threats. the rebellion posed to the Tudor Government
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Exemplar 1 provides an example of solid evaluation and sound knowledge that took the response into Level 5 at 24 marks. A number of responses showed uneven evaluation with one interpretation being treated more fully, and candidates should be encouraged to give equal treatment to the two.

Assessment for learning



Responses need to identify the overall view of each interpretation about the issue in the question – in this instance, was the Western Rebellion a serious threat?

Misconception



There were a number of misconceptions about the Western Rebellion:

- The Western Rebellion did not take place in the North.
- It was not led by Kett.
- The rebels did not take Exeter, nor Norwich.

Assessment for learning



Candidates might be helped by having a list of evaluative words and phrases displayed in the classroom.

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 answers will test a hypothesis and reach a supported judgement.

Question 2*

2* 'Tudor rebellions were the responses of local communities to local grievances.'

How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1485 to 1603?

[25]

This question was quite popular, but a number drifted to a response that simply focused on the causes of rebellion rather than addressing the specific demands of the question. A simple structure that argued whether they were national or local grievances often provided the best approach and within that structure responses then looked at issues such as dynastic, socio-economic and religious rebellions.

Dynastic and socio-economic concerns were usually handled well, with most arguing that dynastic or even factional issues were more national than local, using examples such as the Yorkist challenge under Henry VII or the factional disputes of Essex and the Northern Earls, although some did note some the local issues in the latter. Similarly, in discussing socio-economic issues most suggested they were local grievances, such as taxation under Henry VII or enclosure under Edward VI, most notably the Kett/Flowerdew conflict, although again some did argue that underlying some of the grievances under Edward were wider national issues such as inflation.

It was religion that caused the most difficulty. Some argued that all religious issues were local, pointing to issues such as the Louth Spire, the importance of monasteries in the North and the use of the Cornish language for the Prayer Book. However, this was often not developed, whereas the strongest responses noted that although there were local religious issues, such as particular saint's days, these rebellions were also responses to national legislation. A discussion that took this approach was more likely to display synthesis and make the explained comparisons needed for the higher levels.

Misconception



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

Question 3*

3* 'Rebellions with foreign support were the most serious threat to Tudor governments.'

How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1485 to 1603?

[25]

This was the most popular question and produced a wide range of responses. The most successful answers did focus on the threat and what was needed to create a threat, while less successful answers explained the foreign response and did not link this to the concept of threat. Most responses considered the foreign support provided for the Pretender Rebellions under Henry VII and Spanish support for Tyrone's Rebellion, although there were some who considered the potential or failed foreign support for rebellions such as the Pilgrimage of Grace and Wyatt's. Many claimed that foreign support was crucial for the threat posed by these rebellions but often did not explain why it led to them being a threat, for example it was the foreign support that resulted in Simnel being able to come close to victory at East Stoke. Some responses argued that foreign support did not create a threat as Irish aid for Simnel put off potential support, foreign support for Warbeck did not allow a serious challenge and that Spanish support for Tyrone hastened the defeat at Kinsale.

More successful responses compared foreign support to issues such as aims, support, location and leadership and often argued that where these were combined, the threat was greater, with many suggesting that rebellions, such as the Pilgrimage of Grace, were a threat because of the size, cross-class support and leadership, particularly given Henry VIII's inability to raise a large force, others argued that dynastic rebellions were a greater threat because of the aims and used the Northumberland/Lady Jane Grey coup to support their argument.

Less successful responses adopted a chronological approach and simply explained the threat posed by a range, often narrow, of each rebellion, which prevented synthesis from being displayed.

Question 4*

4* 'All Tudor monarchs maintained political stability in the same way.'

How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1485 to 1603?

[25]

Although this was the least popular question, it produced a wide range of responses, with less successful ones either considering only a few methods used or assessed how Tudor governments responded to rebellions rather than on methods to sustain stability. However, those that did address the demands often found little difficulty in comparing and explaining the responses of different monarchs and were therefore able to access the higher levels as the example below shows.

Responses considered issues such as using those in the localities to maintain stability, with stronger responses developing this and arguing that the actual methods changed as JP's, gentry and the middling sort became more important. Similarly, some considered the role of the Church and argued that it was used consistently, particularly in terms of preaching and the provision of homilies. In arguing that methods changed, many considered the use of force and argued that this was more apparent under Henry VII and Edward VI given the weakness of their position. Similarly, responses also considered how the use of parliament changed and increased and, as a result, legislation became more important, using evidence from the socio-economic measures adopted by Edward VI and Elizabeth.

There was much that candidates could consider, but examiners did not expect all issues to be considered; what mattered was the quality of explanation and synthesis, with focus on continuity and change.

Exemplar 2

4. I only do not support the view that all Tudor monarchs maintained a political stability, stabilised the same way - that the PA for the crown was consistently a source of authority over the Tudor period, so it is that some to this was a continuous maintenance. However, church-crown relations significantly varied from monarch to monarch sparked by Henry VIII's reformation. Furthermore, local authorities would see an increased role as the Tudor period progressed indicating change. Finally, finally the relatively methods of controlling the nobility however did largely remain the same.

Methods All Tudor monarchs recognised the need to control the nobility. At the start of the period, this was excessive by Henry VII due to the power possessed by noble leader such as Percy, who controlled 100,000 men. Acts of livery and maintenance were passed in 1487 while 138 acts of attainders were passed. Bonds and recognisances were used also to bind nobles financially loyal. Henry VIII & other Tudor monarchs recognised the need to control the nobility - vast lands from the Newlands, Percys and Poles was ^{attained} after the Northern Earls revolt, while Henry VIII dismantled castles and seized cannons. Therefore, we can see a consistency in that Tudors recognised the need to reduce noble power to maintain stability. Paid patronage was also consistent as a means of holding nobles loyal through the promise of reward. Edward VI's council rewarded nobles with such as the Earl of Warwick whilst for Elizabeth England the number of peers reduced to 300. Thus therefore, we can say that overall, there was a Tudor consistent idea recognition that monarchs consistently recognised the need to control nobles through the promise of reward or the use of harsh measures with both being used.

Over the course of the period 1485-1603 Tudor monarchs fairly consistently used the crown to maintain political stability. Despite the crown had continuing authority over regional councils and government and had ultimate rule. Over 400 proclamations were issued over the Tudor period to reinforce their authority. Henry VII was issued proclamations discrediting a pretender while Elizabeth did so to raise men for against the Northern Lords in 1569. Although we could argue that there was a weak Tudor period in during Edward VI and Mary's reign - while Henry VIII, Henry VII and ^{Elizabeth} Mary or had significant command over their governments. Mary and Edward were weaker - Edward as a minor and Mary as a prisoner. This could be reflected in the frequency of rebellion in their reigns. Therefore, the general authority of the monarch can be considered not consistent hence political stability was not always maintained the same way. Nonetheless Tudor monarchs did use propaganda consistently. Henry VI slow power. Henry VII claimed descent from King Arthur. Henry VIII minted coins with a closed crown, while Edward VI to show superior status, Edward had portraits done to show resemblance to his powerful father and Elizabeth showed wealth through pageantry. Overall ultimately, the maintenance of political stability was fairly remained somewhat the same when considering the weak Tudor period.

Where ~~major~~ significant differences can be seen is the maintenance of stability through the church as the power the monarch held varied from monarch to monarch. While Henry VII recognised papal authority Henry VIII took control of the Church of England in 1534. This gave him, and ^{his} future monarchs to implement their own reforms. This resulted in the ~~reform~~ protestant reformation in 1534, 47 and 59, while Mary was able to implement catholic reforms. Therefore, we

		can say that after there was a turning point in the reign of Henry VIII as now the monarch had authority over the church. Yet this remained fairly continuous over the whole Tudor period - will not even ^{ecclesiastic} Mary even reinstate Papal authority. But Tudor monarchs were different in that the proportion of clergy in their councils changed. Henry VIII's last chancellor was the archbishop and Henry VIII had vast religious influence up until 1534 - bishops at Warham, Fox and Tunstall and Cardinal Wolsey played a large role. However after 1534 laymen held a role in Henry VIII's government - Cromwell, Audley, Rich. This was also the case for Edward and Elizabeth. There is a slight exception in that Mary reinstated had Cardinal Pole as her last chancellor. However, Merce. We can say that not all Tudor monarchs maintained stability in the same way, as evidenced by the make up make up of their councils, decided decided in the different proportions of clergymen. Overall, Tudor monarchs retained different levels of authority over the Church or ^{welcomed} welcomed varying levels of influence of the Church over government.
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The ~~main~~ maintenance of political stability ^{at a} local level also changed over the period. We can examine how the role of JPs over the centuries changed. While the influence of sheriffs decreased, the number and role of JPs increased. ~~from 1685~~ In 1685 there were 10 per county, but by 1803 there was 50 per county. This development was largely seen under Elizabeth, so it is clear that she was different to other monarchs in that she accelerated the number of JPs. Also, the role of JPs changed. While under both Henry's, JPs had a primarily judicial function in combatting crime. Under Edward, Mary, Elizabeth they took on increased role in poor relief. Under Edward they were to distribute state money and Elizabeth they were to provide material for the poor to work with and distribute weapons arms collections. And therefore ^{we can say that} JPs function and function also varied. Regional councils underwent a change from monarch to monarch. ~~In terms of the council of the North~~ There was a clear evidence of change. It was first established under Henry VII in 1484 but ^{remained} effectiveness ~~remained~~ limited. Under Henry VIII and Elizabeth JPs were frequently replaced and deputy workship was handed over to lesser gentry. Edward VI in 1547-9 established the council of the Marches but this was now redundant. ~~The~~ We can say that the local authorities role changed from monarch to monarch and received varying support, hence I agree with the view that these changed.

A Tudor monarchs ~~cost~~ the maintenance

The maintenance of political stability certainly reflects the personality of the monarch so it is no surprise there was a vast difference. ~~for~~ There was a major Tudor period under Edward and Mary.

Exemplar 2 was placed at the bottom of Level 6 and awarded 21 marks as there was sustained synthesis, but to go higher in the level this needed to be further developed.

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