

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

HISTORY A

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in History A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y222/01 Summer 2025 series

Contents

Introduction3

Paper Y222 series overview4

 Question 1 (a) (i) and (ii)5

 Question 1 (b)*5

 Question 2 (a) (i) and (ii)9

 Question 2 (b)*13

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.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from [Teach Cambridge](#).

Would you prefer a Word version?

Did you know that you can save this PDF as a Word file using Acrobat Professional?

Simply click on **File > Export to** and select **Microsoft Word**

(If you have opened this PDF in your browser you will need to save it first. Simply right click anywhere on the page and select **Save as . . .** to save the PDF. Then open the PDF in Acrobat Professional.)

If you do not have access to Acrobat Professional there are a number of **free** applications available that will also convert PDF to Word (search for PDF to Word converter).

Paper Y222 series overview

Y222 is one of twenty-four units in Paper 2 for the A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests a coherent period of non-British History through a short answer essay question and a traditional essay question. The paper contains two questions, each having two parts, a short answer essay and a traditional essay. Candidates have to answer both parts of one question.

To do well on the short answer essay question, candidates need to consider the significance or importance of both issues, factors, individuals or events mentioned in relation to the question. Having analysed or explained both they must reach a supported judgement as to which is the most important or significant.

To do well on the traditional essay, candidates need to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. To reach the higher levels candidates need to assess the issues they discuss and reach a supported judgement, at least in the conclusion.

In this session Question 1 was answered by a larger proportion of candidates.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short answer essay - reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important - linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question - in answering the essay question candidates discussed at least two issues in depth - comparatively evaluated their chosen factors in the essays - gave supporting detail which was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic - reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question - made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question.	- considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way - produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response - were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question - showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay - were unable to support their answer with relevant or accurate material - did not focus on the precise wording of the question - made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

OCR support



You can find information on exam review webinars and other support events in **Training** on the horizontal menu within AS and A Level History A on [Teach Cambridge](#).

Question 1 (a) (i) and (ii)

1

(a) Which of the following was of greater importance as a reason for the Geneva Conference of 1954?

(i) The influence of foreign powers

(ii) Internal divisions in Vietnam

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

This was the more popular of the two questions and it elicited a wide range of responses. Stronger responses were able to analyse and evaluate both factors using specific contextual details. Such responses were able to discuss a range of foreign power involvement, including the desire of China to keep the USA out of Indo-China, a French desire to achieve a settlement after the defeat at Dien Bien Phu, the USSR wanting a settlement to create a thaw in the Cold War as well as British and US desires to ensure their own strategic fears were contained. In dealing with internal divisions, strong responses looked at the opposing positions of the North and South Vietnamese as well as the leadership of Ho Chi Minh and Bao Dai and their views on the future of Vietnam.

Question 1 (b)*

(b)* 'The USSR had more influence than Western states in Post War Asia during the period from 1945 to 1979.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

This question also elicited a wide range of responses with more successful responses examining a number of areas where influence could be compared. These answers largely focused on the Korean War, Vietnam and Japan and the Philippines. More successful responses also included relations with China as well as British actions in Malaysia. Less successful responses attempted to look at the influence of China on Asia which took them beyond the scope of the question. The chosen response adopts a consistently analytical approach which reaches a substantiated judgement and was thus awarded with a mark in L5.

Assessment for learning



It is important that candidates answer the specific question set with many candidates diverting into a discussion of China's influence on Asia across the period in this question.

Exemplar 1

1	b	As a result of World War Two the USSR initially held more influence than the Western Powers in Asia, however as the time progressed their influence lessened with the Western Powers during the 1950's and 60's but regained as superiority to an extent in the 1970's. After the Conferences of the at Yalta and Potsdam, the USSR saw itself with with influence in China with their occupation and access to the Manchurian Port Arthur, giving the Soviets warm water access, and it also saw itself with complete control over the Sakhalin islands to located North of Japan and off the Eastern Coast of Russia. In the early 1950's after the fall of China to Communism the Soviets saw themselves with a powerful ally in Mao and the CCP, they used Chinese influence and support as a way to maintain influence in the region. The Korean War is a key example of this, where Kim Il Sung with the support of Stalin initiated an an invasion of the South, this showed Communist strength as within the first stage of the invasion the North Koreans were able to push the South to a small island off the coast. However this success was short lived as they were pushed to the Chinese border and then with Chinese assistance they were kept at a stalemate around the 38th parallel, this ensured Soviet influence was maintained in Korea.
---	---	--

However, ~~Soviet~~ Soviet influence was challenged by the USA. After the Second World War the USA created two model states; the Philippines and Japan. These two model states were used as a way to commit to Truman's doctrine of containment, as these two islands encircled South East Asia. These model states were significant during the Vietnam war, as they gave the USA the capabilities to exert military force in a quick and effective manner. The military base in Okinawa, for example had 50,000 personnel stationed there ready to deploy. ~~With~~ Within Vietnam, after Lyndon B. Johnson's Gulf of Tonkin resolution the amount of military personnel rose to 549,000, this extreme presence of advisors ensured that the USA would ~~be~~ maintain influence in the region in an administrative respect. ~~Overall~~ Overall the USA's influence in ~~the region of~~ Asia at this stage was able to rival that of the USSR.

On the otherhand, in The 1970's the Soviets regained their strength and highly influential position. Although they were no longer allies with China, they still held authority in South East Asia due to The fall of Southern Vietnam in ~~the~~ the 1970's, this was a result of the US withdrawing troops under Nixon's 'peace with honour' and the impact of Vietnamisation leaving a vulnerable and weak South ~~states~~. The weakness of the South after the US left led to the North taking control. The new Communist Vietnam was highly dependant on The Soviet Union for economic

and military aid, similar to Kim's North Korea, and the Soviets were able to maintain this link until Gorbachev ended due to Vietnam's dependence on the Soviets.

Overall, throughout the period of 1945 to 1979 the Soviets held more influence in South East Asia than the western powers as a result of the establishment of communist regimes in China, ~~the~~ Korea and Vietnam. ~~that~~ these 3 countries remain 'communist' to this day and present the legacy of Soviet nation building and assistance, showing a persisting influence in the region.

Exemplar 2 adopts a consistently analytical approach which reaches a substantiated judgement and was thus awarded a mark in Level 5.

Question 2 (a) (i) and (ii)

2

(a) Which of the following had the greater impact on US policy towards China and Taiwan?

(i) Nixon's visit to China in 1972

(ii) The end of recognition for Taiwan in 1979

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

This question was less popular than Question 1 but offered a wide range of responses. Most candidates were aware of the significance of Nixon's visit, although specific details varied. Less successful responses believed it led to 'ping-pong diplomacy' instead of being a result of this. Most responses accurately assessed that the possibility of confrontation declined as a result and were able to discuss the mutual economic benefits of the visit, although only the strongest responses assessed the communique that was issued by both sides. Candidates were less secure on the end of recognition for Taiwan in 1979 with only the most successful evaluating Carter's end of the defensive pact or his continued military sales or indeed the guarantee of independence in 1979.

Exemplar 2

2	a)	Nixon's visit to China in 1972 had a far more significant impact on US policy towards China and Taiwan, as it shifted policy ^{more} correctly towards détente. Following the visit, Nixon reduced trade restrictions on Chinese goods, showing that tension between the two countries was easing, as they now had a good enough relationship to be exchange goods. This was a huge change from ^{between} 1950 and 1970, as there was not even an exchange between ambassadors during this period. Therefore, it is clear that the the trip was reducing tension and the threat of war, and was therefore shifting policy away from repression and towards détente. The trip also led to Nixon removing the US's veto on China reversing their seat in the United Nations. It is therefore clear to see that the two countries were becoming more willing to work with each other in diplomatic circumstances, and so tension was easing and détente moved to the forefront of US policy. President Ford followed up Nixon's visit in 1975, showing that the shift in US policy was maintained beyond 1972. Therefore it is clear to see that Nixon's trip ^{visit} to China was most significant
---	----	--

in impacting US policy as it was the event that sped up the movement from aggressive foreign policy towards détente.

Whilst the USA's end of recognition for Taiwan was also significant in impacting US policy towards China and Taiwan, it was less significant, as it only continued the policy of détente laid out in Nixon's visit. ~~Nixon's visit~~ The 1954 mutual defence treaty ^{with Taiwan} was not reaffirmed by the USA, showing that the USA was reducing its arms in the Chinese area. Therefore, the policy of détente was being continued, as by reducing military support to Taiwan, the USA was reducing its ~~as~~ military aggression towards China. Therefore, ending ~~that~~ recognition and ^{reducing} support for Taiwan was only ~~showing~~ forwarding Nixon's policy of ~~continued~~ détente, and so ~~was~~ had a lesser impact on shifting US policy. The USA also withdrew its military advisory group MAAG in 1979, showing again that military support for Taiwan was being rejected and so the policy of détente was being further pursued. Ping's seat at the UN was recorded, and the USA's seventh naval fleet, positioned in the Taiwanese Strait

in 1971, was withdrawn. ~~is~~ Again, it is clear that the USA was reducing military ~~to~~ ~~depression~~ towards China and therefore was pursuing détente. Cutting diplomatic ties with Taiwan by reversing his UN seat is also an example of détente with China, as it shows they were less fearful of a Sino-American war, and so needed less ~~defence~~ ~~against~~ support from countries who pushed anti-Chinese foreign policy.

Therefore, while the end of reciprocity for Taiwan was key in shifting US policy towards détente, it was less significant than Nixon's visit to China in impacting US policy, ~~as~~ as the 1972 visit was far more key in laying down the foundations for ~~the~~ further de-militarisation and détente.

Exemplar 2 demonstrates a response which thoroughly analyses both features before arriving at a judgement. This was awarded a Level 6 mark.

Question 2 (b)*

(b)* Assess the reasons for the overthrow of Sihanouk in 1970.

[20]

This question saw a range of responses with the most successful having a secure contextual understanding of the chronology of Sihanouk's overthrow. Strong responses saw his personal failings as being significant with discussions centred on his extravagance, his absences in France, corruption and his lack of loyalty towards those around him. Other factors examined American destabilisation of Cambodia and their bombing campaigns as well as the ambitions of Lon Nol. Pol Pot's role was often misunderstood though, with some believing it was him rather than Lon Nol that overthrew Sihanouk in 1970.

Misconception



Some candidates saw Pol Pot as overthrowing Sihanouk in 1970 rather than Lol Non.

Supporting you

Teach Cambridge

Make sure you visit our secure website [Teach Cambridge](#) to find the full range of resources and support for the subjects you teach. This includes secure materials such as set assignments and exemplars, online and on-demand training.

Don't have access? If your school or college teaches any OCR qualifications, please contact your exams officer. You can [forward them this link](#) to help get you started.

Reviews of marking

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#).

Access to Scripts

We've made it easier for Exams Officers to download copies of your candidates' completed papers or 'scripts'. Your centre can use these scripts to decide whether to request a review of marking and to support teaching and learning.

Our free, on-demand service, Access to Scripts is available via our single sign-on service, My Cambridge. Step-by-step instructions are on our [website](#).

Keep up-to-date

We send a monthly bulletin to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, [sign up here](#).

OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular professional development courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

Signed up for ExamBuilder?

ExamBuilder is the exam paper builder platform for a range of our qualifications. [Find out more](#).

Free for all OCR centres with an Interchange account, it allows unlimited users per centre. We require an [Interchange](#) username to verify your centre's users for ExamBuilder.

If you do not have an Interchange account, please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username.

Once you have an Interchange username, use the form on [this page](#) to sign up for ExamBuilder, or ask an existing user at your centre to create an ExamBuilder account for you.

Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals (examined units only).

[Find out more](#).

Online courses

Enhance your skills and confidence in internal assessment

What are our online courses?

Our online courses are self-paced eLearning courses designed to help you deliver, mark and administer internal assessment for our qualifications. They are suitable for both new and experienced teachers who want to refresh their knowledge and practice.

Why should you use our online courses?

With these online courses you will:

- learn about the key principles and processes of internal assessment and standardisation
- gain a deeper understanding of the marking criteria and how to apply them consistently and accurately
- see examples of student work with commentary and feedback from OCR moderators
- have the opportunity to practise marking and compare your judgements with those of OCR moderators
- receive instant feedback and guidance on your marking and standardisation skills
- be able to track your progress and achievements through the courses.

How can you access our online courses?

Access courses from [Teach Cambridge](#). Teach Cambridge is our secure teacher website, where you'll find all teacher support for your subject.

If you already have a Teach Cambridge account, you'll find the link to the **Online courses** under the **Assessment** or **Training** tab – hover over **Assessment** or **Training** on the horizontal menu and select **Online courses** from the dropdown.

If you don't have a Teach Cambridge account yet, ask your exams officer to set you up – just send them this [link](#) and ask them to add you as a Teacher.

Access the courses **anytime, anywhere and at your own pace**. You can also revisit the courses as many times as you need.

Which courses are available?

We recommend all teachers complete the module on Online courses – NEA for their subject. These courses provide subject-specific information about course content; how to prepare for planning, marking and submitting; and support with understanding the marking criteria.

The subject-specific courses are tailored for each qualification that has non-exam assessment (NEA) units, except for AS Level and Entry Level. They cover the following topics:

- the structure and content of the NEA units
- the assessment objectives and marking criteria for the NEA units
- examples of student work with commentary and feedback for the NEA units
- interactive marking practice and feedback for the NEA units.

We are also developing courses for some of the examined units, which will be available soon.

How can you get support and feedback?

If you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Centre on 01223 553998 or email support@ocr.org.uk.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions on how to improve the online courses and make them more useful and relevant for you. You can share your views by completing the evaluation form at the end of each course.

Tell us what you think

Your feedback plays an important role in how we develop, market, support and resource qualifications now and into the future. We want you and your students to enjoy and get the best out of our qualifications and resources, but to do that we need your honest opinions to tell us whether we're on the right track or not.

You can email your thoughts to resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk or visit our [feedback page](#) to learn more about how you can help us improve our resources.



Designing and testing in [collaboration with you](#) and your students



Helping young people develop an [ethical view of the world](#)



Equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) are [part of everything we do](#)

Contact the team at:

☎ 01223 553998

🖥 ocr.org.uk

To stay up to date with all the relevant news about our qualifications, register for email updates at ocr.org.uk/updates

Visit our Online Support Centre at support.ocr.org.uk



OCR is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

OCR is a Company Limited by Guarantee and an exempt charity. Registered in England. Registered office: The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA. Registered company number: 3484466.

We operate academic and vocational qualifications regulated by Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA as listed in their qualifications registers.

We are committed to providing a fully accessible experience across all our products, platforms, and websites. Find out more about our [accessibility standards](#).

© OCR 2025. All rights reserved. We retain the copyright on all our publications. However, our registered centres are permitted to copy and distribute our material for their own internal use, in line with any specific restrictions detailed in the publication. Find out more about our [copyright policies](#).

We update our publications regularly so please check you have the most up-to-date version.

We cannot be held responsible for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and do not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

When we update our specifications, you'll see a new version number and a summary of the changes. While we do our best to reflect these changes in all associated resources on [Teach Cambridge](#), if you notice any discrepancies, please refer to the latest specification on our website and [let us know](#).

Our resources do not represent any teaching method we expect you to use. We cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in our resources.