

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

# HISTORY A

**OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in History A**

**H505**

For first teaching in 2015

**Y111/01 Summer 2025 series**

# Contents

Introduction ..... 3

Paper Y111 series overview ..... 4

Section A overview ..... 5

    Question 1 ..... 5

Section B overview ..... 7

    Question 2\* ..... 7

    Question 3\* ..... 9

## 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 1 series overview

Y111 is one of thirteen units in Paper 1 for the A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about fifty years through an Enquiries or source-based question and a traditional essay question. The paper is divided into two sections. In Section A, candidates have to answer a compulsory source question based on four written primary sources. The question requires them to use all four sources to assess the validity of a view. In Section B, candidates are required to answer one essay question from a choice of two.

To do well on Section A, candidates need to be able to consider both provenance of the sources and apply contextual knowledge to them in order to reach a judgement about the sources in relation to the issue in the question. The judgement should be based on an evaluation of the reliability of the evidence given, not on the topic or contextual knowledge. To reach Level 6, a judgement should be made at the end of the analysis of each source, with an overall judgement in the conclusion.

To do well on Section B, candidates need to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. In order to reach the higher levels, candidates will need to assess the issues they discuss and reach a supported judgement at least in the conclusion. To reach Level 6 candidates should also make an overall judgement as well as interim judgements when assessing each factor.

| Candidates who did well on this paper generally:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>considered the provenance of the source(s) and used relevant contextual knowledge</li> <li>clearly linked the contextual knowledge to the source being discussed to show whether the view of the source was valid or not</li> <li>reached an overall judgement as to the extent to which the sources supported the view in the question</li> <li>in answering the essay question candidates discussed at least two issues in depth</li> <li>presented supporting detail which was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic</li> <li>reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question</li> <li>made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>did not consider both the provenance and use contextual knowledge to evaluate the sources</li> <li>wrote an unbalanced answer in their treatment of the sources, with very little consideration of one of the sources</li> <li>reached a judgement based on their knowledge rather than the sources</li> <li>showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay</li> <li>were unable to support their answer with relevant material</li> <li>did not focus on the precise wording of the question</li> <li>made unsupported comments about issues which were assertions.</li> </ul> |

### OCR support



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## Section A overview

There is one compulsory question in this section. This question requires candidates to critically assess evidence and reach judgements. The critical evaluation of sources is the central theme in this section with all marks given against AO2.

The Enquiry section in Paper Y111 is focused on whether working people were prepared to sacrifice their rights and liberties to support the national war effort in World War One.

### Question 1

#### England and a New Century c.1900–1918

- 1 'Working people were prepared to sacrifice their rights and liberties to support the national war effort.'

Use the **four** sources in their historical context to assess how far they support this view. [30]

This was generally well-answered, with candidates able to provide a range of contextual detail surrounding the idea of rights and liberties. Government reform in the case of the Defence of the Realm Act, was particularly well-used as was the Munitions of War Act 1915. Similarly, discussions of trade union unrest prior to the war as well as Suffragette actions was equally used to good effect. Knowledge of the war, including key battles and the impact of the U-boat campaigns and their impact by 1917 were often seen in these answers. Provenance was similarly well-handled with most candidates able to discuss the typicality of sources from female factory workers and members of the Land Army, while knowledge of Cook was well-known. Candidates who focused on the purpose of these sources were well-rewarded when evaluating provenance. Many candidates were able to evaluate using both contextual knowledge and provenance, although where one of these was missing, answers stalled at Level 3 and below. Judgement continues to be an issue with good answers remaining in Level 4 due to a lack of judgement. In order to reach Level 5 there needs to be an overall judgement based on provenance and to achieve Level 6 then there would also be judgements about each source, again based on provenance, after each source has been discussed.

#### Assessment for learning



In order to reach Level 5 there needs to be an overall judgement based on provenance and to achieve Level 6 then there would also be judgements about each source, again based on provenance, after each source has been discussed.

## Exemplar 1

|  |  |                                                                                |
|--|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  | To conclude, overall the four sources do not support                           |
|  |  | the view that people were prepared <sup>to a considerable extent</sup> to lose |
|  |  | their rights and liberties to support war effort                               |
|  |  | as all four sources acknowledged that there                                    |
|  |  | were people who didn't support war effort. <del>As</del> With                  |
|  |  | Source A and B being the 2 source that represent this                          |
|  |  | view strongly. Whilst Source D viewed that majority                            |
|  |  | supported war it also <del>also</del> recognised that there were               |
|  |  | some who didn't. Source C although presenting a strong                         |
|  |  | impression that people supported it had a low validity. Therefore              |
|  |  | overall, the four sources does not support the view                            |
|  |  | to a considerable extent.                                                      |

The chosen exemplar shows a source question where there was no judgement in the conclusion, meaning that the answer remained in Level 4 as a result. The candidate had evaluated using contextual knowledge and provenance in the rest of the response but without a judgement there was no full analysis required for Level 5 and Level 6.

## Section B overview

Candidates are required to answer one essay from a choice of two. Each question is taken from a different Key Topic and requires candidates to weigh up the importance of a range of factors or issues.

In Paper Y111, the candidates were asked to assess the reasons for the Liberal defeat in the 1874 election or to assess how successful British imperial and foreign policy was in protecting the nation's interest in the period 1880-1902.

### Question 2\*

#### **Liberals, Conservatives and the Rise of Labour 1846–1902**

**2\*** Assess the reasons for the defeat of the Liberals in the election of 1874.

**[20]**

This was the overwhelmingly more popular of the essay questions and it was generally well-handled by the majority of candidates. Candidates were able to discuss a range of reasons for the Liberal defeat, including a number of unpopular reforms such as the Licensing Act as well as the Disestablishment of the Church in Ireland and the impact this had on Gladstone's popularity. These were compared to the unpopularity and weakness of Gladstone's foreign policy, especially in comparison to Palmerston. Finally, the reorganisation of the Conservatives and the effectiveness of Disraeli's campaign were also a feature of many responses. As usual candidates who were able to comparatively evaluate a range of reasons were rewarded with a mark in Level 5 and above, while those who listed factors without comparison were confined to Level 4 or below.

## Exemplar 2

|  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  | <p>Thus overall, Gladstone's loss of his traditional voter base meant the Liberals lost the 1874 election. However, the most important reason was his loss of working class support and hence Disraeli's 'Tory Democracy'. Due to the 1867 Reform Act, the working class were a more important voter bloc than ever, and Gladstone's contradictory behaviour towards them was thus magnified in terms of election results. Gladstone's support had largely come from the working class prior to 1874 and he was known as the 'People's Champion', making his loss of working class support more important than his angering the aristocracy who were already</p> |
|  |  | <p>disproportionately Conservatives. It was also this loss of working class support that led to Disraeli's popularity - if Gladstone had retained his popularity it is unlikely that 'Tory Democracy' would have become popular in the first place. Because of the influence of other factors and its importance in itself, the most important reason for the defeat of the Liberals in 1874 was loss of working class support for Gladstone and the Liberal Party.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                          |

Exemplar 2 is the conclusion to a Level 6 response. Leading to this conclusion the response included, Gladstone's alienation of the Anglican Church, his complex relationship with workers and trade unions, his unpopular foreign policy, and Disraeli's invigorated Conservatives. The conclusion builds on earlier evaluation and makes it clear that the loss of working-class support was the most important reason for the Liberal defeat.

### Question 3\*

- 3\*** How successful was British imperial and foreign policy in protecting the nation's interests during the period from 1880 to 1902. **[20]**

Very few responses were seen on this question. The best responses had a good chronological understanding of foreign policy across this period and were able to focus on whether policy protected British interests successfully. Candidates used a range of evidence here including the Fashoda Incident, the maintenance of the navy and the containment of Russia in the Mediterranean through agreements with Italy and Austria-Hungary. This was contrasted with events in South Africa, the Sudan and Afghanistan as being less successful.

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