

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

HISTORY A

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in History A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y108/01 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 Y108 series overview

Y108 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:
- considered the provenance of the source(s) and used relevant contextual knowledge - the contextual knowledge was clearly linked to the source being discussed to show whether the view of the source was valid or not - reached an overall judgement as to the extent to which the sources supported the view in the question - in answering the essay question candidates discussed at least two issues in depth - the supporting detail 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.	- did not consider both the provenance and use contextual knowledge to evaluate the sources - wrote an unbalanced answer in their treatment of the sources, with very little consideration of one of the sources - reached a judgement based on their knowledge rather than the sources - showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay - were unable to support their answer with relevant material - did not focus on the precise wording of the question - made unsupported comments about issues which were assertions.

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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. This is the only part of the A Level examination that requires candidates to engage with primary sources and therefore responses should be driven by critical assessments of the given sources. The critical evaluation of sources is the central theme in this section with all marks given against AO2. Responses should consider both the provenance of the sources and use contextual knowledge to set the sources in context and just the validity of the views presented. Responses should reach a judgement based on the provenance of the sources as to how far they support the view in the question.

The Enquiry section in Paper Y108 is focused on why negotiations between Charles and his opponents failed to reach a settlement in the period 1646-7.

Question 1

The Execution of Charles I and the Interregnum 1646–1660

- 1 'Divisions amongst Charles I's opponents were the main reason why negotiations failed during 1646 and 1647'.

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

Although most candidates were able to access the sources, there were a number who did not see the full implications of either Sources B or C, leading to a response which was not fully developed or explained. Most were able to explain Source A and argued that it showed Charles was to blame as he would not accept the Newcastle Propositions, which most were able to explain, and went on to argue that because this was private letter to his wife was likely to be reliable in terms of its view. A significant number commented on his close relationship with his wife and also reflected on her attempts to gain French help. Source B was more challenging for many, who did not grasp the message that the Independents did not want any government and also wanted liberty of conscience, which clashed with the Presbyterians and created a division. Responses were aware that there were divisions between different religious groups but did not pick up the point in the source. However, most were able to comment on the possibility of exaggeration given it was written in a pamphlet by a Presbyterian who would be likely to be persuading his audience, particularly a London audience given the concerns of many about the growing radicalism in the army. Source C presented a different challenge for many. This source offered two possible reasons for the failure to find a settlement, but many commented on only part of the source. Some noted that it suggested the king was to blame but ignored the first part of the source that suggested a series of divisions between his opponents, and it was surprising that only a few picked up on the comment that 'The Presbyterian party and the City of London opposed the army to death.' There was also some misunderstanding around the provenance of the source, with many not commenting on it being written during the reign of Charles II when royalism was strong. In discussing Source D most commented on the divisions between the Levellers and Cromwell, with more successful responses commenting on Cromwell's view of the social hierarchy and contrasting that with the growth and attitudes of radical groups, such as the Levellers and Diggers, although some did argue that these numbers were small and were crushed at Corkbush. The provenance was a greater challenge for some, but in this instance the purpose was crucial as Cromwell was trying to persuade his audience of the radical nature of the Levellers and the threat they posed.

Exemplar 1

16	Source D provides provides the strongest evidence for the statement that 'divisions amongst Charles's opponents were the main reason why negotiations failed during 1646 and 1647.' Source D describes during the Putney Debates how the New Model Army is politically split and how the Levellers push for reform which Cromwell insists will cause chaos. This is a strong evidence to support the statement. Source C and Source B are both moderately strong in support of divisions being the reason why a political settlement is never reached as they describe the divide among different groups however Source C's perspective being after the restoration of Charles II makes it weaker. Source B has a less convincing argument but due to less evidence and a weaker argument in the case. Source A is the weakest argument in support of the statement that Charles's opponents are the main reason divisions were the main reason negotiations failed as the source shows how Charles sabotages the two propositions at Newcastle for his own reasons. Source D is a very strong source to support the view that divisions among Charles's opponents ^{Charles's} the lack of a political Charles's opponents caused the lack of a negotiation to be successful. Source D states by Cromwell that "this paper contains very great alterations of the government of the Kingdom." This is followed by "how do we know
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if, while we are debating, another group of men might submit another proposal as acceptable as this? This highlights firstly how outrageous the demands of the Levellers in the New Model army are at the Putney debates compared to what Cromwell envisages in terms of a settlement. This demonstrates how the group which encompasses Cromwell, the New Model army, is ~~not~~ against his proposals. This creates the divide between the Grandees, such as ~~for~~ Fairfax, Oliver Cromwell and Henry Innes, and the rest of the New Model army. This culminates in the Cobham ~~debates~~ field meeting of 1647 where the ~~debates~~ new model army revolted. Here 3 of their leaders are executed by the Grandees. Thus this scene is highly convincing to the view as it shows how the New Model army, which are opponents of Clubs, and the Officers in it (Grandees) are highly divided. The army itself has radical ideas and revolted because of this. This is interpreted in an 'Agreement of the people' by Harrington to Fairfax. It is clear that opponents of Unit 1 are the reason why negotiation failed in in this sense as the New Model army is mutinous and against ~~the~~ Cromwell's propositions for being too moderate. The provenance of this scene is also shown as it takes place during 1646-47 where negotiations failed. Cromwell is likely speaking the truth as he wants to reach a negotiation with the it is at a speech to the army where

King, but ~~some~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~states~~, how the New Model army are distrustful of him and their proposals will cause "utter confusion". Thus source D is very strong for supporting the view that Charles's opposition were the main reasons why negotiations failed during 1646-47.

Source C is also convincing as it states how there was much division between different parties during the negotiations which supports the viewpoint. Source C states that, "The Presbyterian party and the City of London opposed the army to death." This highlights how those ~~moderate~~ ~~MPs~~ ~~in~~ ~~London~~ and more moderate Presbyterian factions strongly disliked the political influence of those in the army, which had grown fast. These figures supported the Newcastle proposition of 1646 and later the Heads of Proposal in ~~1646~~ ~~London~~ 1647. However the army wanted sweeping reforms and pushed for more action and permanent restriction of royal authority whereas these settlements offered non permanent measures such as the Heads of Proposal offering partial control of the army for 10 years and the Newcastle proposition wanted 3 years of Presbyterian governance in England. Moreover source C states how "agitator General Cromwell was antagonistic" stating the divide between Cromwell who was at the time moderate and supported the Heads of Proposal and radical

fortions emerging such as fifth monists and Leodes.
~~This~~ This clearly supports the view that
 Charles' opponents were the reason as to why
 negotiations failed, however this source does not discuss.

~~The~~ The prominence is with the diary Charles II's
 reign which where an enemy would negotiate.
 Here he would be inclined to show divisions of
 the period of interregnum and the divisions in opposition
 of Charles as this is of the situation where Charles II
 wants to re-consolidate the King's authority. Thus
 the source may be chosen to fit the political
 narrative. Therefore the source is weaker due to this aspect
 of supporting the view that Charles I's opponents
 as the reason why negotiations failed.

Source D comparing the place in direct
 negotiation between Charles' opponents and in the
 period 1646-47. Thus it more clearly shows
 divisions and the prominence is more
 prominent. Thus source D more accurately explains
 how Charles I's opponents divisions are the
 main reason why negotiations failed in 1646-47.

Source E is in a more widely story
 as it tells how the army support "liberty of
 conscience". This idea is very central at the
 time and is why divisions can be seen at
 the future debates. The problem of the army
 and their agenda under the Agreement of the

people in 1647 and even results in
 Comet Joyce Kidnaping Chole in 1647.
 This supports the view that the army were the
 reason why no negotiated settlement was
 reached. The same explains the radical views
 of the army and this is supported by
 evidence explaining how Charles' opponents' divisions
 were the reason no negotiations were
 reached from 1646-47. The prominence of
 same B is particularly strong as a party minister
 sent a pamphlet with his name on it. Thus
 his reputation is at stake and he must be truthful.
 However, this could also be seen as a way to
 provide people to oppose the radicals in the
 army. I believe some B is also weaker than
 same C as the argument in C are
 more clear and show the divisions between
 parliament and the army and other factors such as
 Cromwell and the city of London. Thus more
 points are covered. Some D is the strongest
 in support of the view that divisions amongst
 Charles' opponents were the reason a future
 towards a settlement as it highlights direct
 rivalries and differing opinions of the army and
 London Cromwell.

Same A is the weakest source in
 support of the view that the divisions

among Chiles' opponents was the reason why negotiations failed. The same letter from Chiles ~~states~~ ^{states} his mind to the Newcastle parliamentarians, a flat out denial to be elected as long as peace and how Chiles was to "persuade France and allies to accept any negotiation to peace". The same clearly suggests Chiles is being duplicitous and that he is actively trying to sabotage the negotiations to gain power. Thus it shows Chiles is at fault not his opponent. The pro-peace is staying as it is within during negotiations and is a private letter to Henrietta Maria. Chiles would not like and wants to speak his mind as maybe his wife can help in France as she is a French prisoner. Thus the nature of this being a private letter together to Chiles' wife together its argument. However the same shows Chiles is the reason negotiations fail as he is duplicitous and does not want any negotiation but is obsessed with the divine right of Kings. This is therefore a weak source to support the view that the reason negotiations failed was due to divisions amongst opposition members. Source D has as strong as they were a reasonable view and show how divisions played Chiles' opposition, however they have some limitations. Source D is by far the most convincing as its argument is strong and its provenance is also strong.

		In conclusion source D is the strongest source in support of the view that Charles's opponents north were even more violent. The provenance is very strong as the content clearly shows a huge split between factions. Source C is also strong due to the range of sources it covers but its provenance being after the restoration limits its value. Source B is mostly strong as it has a good provenance and argument but suggests that there were divisions among opponents and were just misinterpretations. Source A is the weakest as it is supported by the month that Charles's opponents caused the failure of the negotiations as although the provenance is strong the source conveys the message that Charles himself is at fault.
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Exemplar 1 was placed in Level 5 at 23 marks because there is clear explanation of the sources and a good range of contextual knowledge used to support the arguments presented. Provenance is sound and there is some full analysis of the sources based on their provenance to reach a judgement about the sources and their view about the issue in the question.

Assessment for learning



It cannot be repeated enough that this is a source paper and therefore responses need to be driven by the Sources.

Assessment for learning



Candidates need to read the sources carefully and be aware of what a source is saying about the actual issue in the question.

Assessment for learning

The whole period after the end of the Civil war through to the Restoration is complex in terms of chronology and it is important that learners have a clear understanding of developments.

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 Y108, the candidates were asked to examine the aims of James I's foreign policy and the reasons for the breakdown of Personal Rule.

Question 2*

The Early Stuarts 1603–1646

2* 'The most important aim of James I's foreign policy was peace.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

This was the less popular question and also produced less successful responses as a number struggled to focus on aims and would obviously have preferred a question on the success or failure of his foreign policy or tried to turn it into a question on finance. Most responses attempted to argue that peace was his main aim and usually began by referencing the Treaty of London with Spain and then James' involvement as a peace maker in issues such as the Julich Cleves dispute. Many then argued that the marriage arrangements for his children were further evidence of attempts to achieve peace and this could also be seen in his attitude to the Thirty Years War, but often did not offer a counter argument, while other responses did not consider his whole reign. The more successful responses balanced his aim for peace against financial issues, arguing that he lacked the resources for a more active policy, but then linked this to peace. Similarly, others also argued that his attempts to balance religious opinions, although it could be seen as an aim in itself, was also evidence of his attempts to bring about peace in Europe. There were some responses which suggested that with the outbreak of the Thirty Years War his aims changed, and he was no longer the peacemaker as his title 'Rex Pacificus' suggested. However, there were also a number of responses who became involved in a long narrative of the events surrounding the Spanish match and drifted from the focus of the question to success/failure of the policy.

Question 3*

3* Assess the reasons for the breakdown of Personal Rule.

[20]

This was the more popular question and did produce a number of strong responses. Less successful responses tended to focus more on why Personal Rule began or why there was opposition to it, which was unlikely to take an answer beyond Level 3 as a partial response as the focus needed to be on the actual breakdown. The more successful answers were able to link the issues of financial and religious policies during Personal Rule to the breakdown and how this manifested itself following developments in Scotland. It was often the link between these factors that enabled many to access the higher levels, arguing that events in Scotland were the trigger as it allowed the growing resentment that had been building during Personal Rule over finance and religion to come to the surface when Charles was forced to call parliament to fund the Bishops' War. Knowledge of developments in Scotland that brought all this about was patchy and a greater understanding of events there would have provided the support needed for the argument pursued. A number of responses spent too long focused on why there was opposition to the financial policies rather than explaining how it helped in the breakdown. Most argued that Scotland was responsible and noted that if Charles had not been faced by the war, then Personal Rule may well have continued.

Exemplar 2

3		The reasons for the breakdown of personal rule was due to the Laudian reforms in England, the policies & courts in England, but most importantly the the Bishops' were. The Bishops' were caused the Charles to have to call parliament in order to obtain more subsidies to finance war with the Scots. The Bishops' were caused by the Laudian reforms in Scotland. Firstly Charles had only visited Scotland in 1633, 2 years after he became king of England & his coronation was not at the traditional Stone of Scone, which justified the Scots. Moreover, the 1636 Lord Coombe & the 1637 Prayer Book, first enforced in July 1637, he had called for more Anglican reforms, set rules & responses & had looked towards moving the altar to the East wall of the church & more decorative churches with stained glass windows & more communion. The Laudian reforms were greatly opposed, as seen by the formation of the Covenant, a formal document writing to return Presbyterianism as the state religion, it was signed by over 300 ministers in February 1638, returning the This was the origin of the Bishops' wars 1639-1640, & had caused Charles to call the short parliament in April 1640, after advice from Wentworth who had been recalled from Ireland, where he served as the Deputy of Ireland since 1633. Wentworth advised Charles to call the ^{short} parliament, ^{lasting 3 weeks,} calling for the end of personal rule, as Charles needed 300,000 pounds to repay the
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Scots led by Alexander Leslie. The Treaty of Ripon agreed in October 1640 between the Scots & Charles after they marched through Newcastle, agreed that Charles had to pay £850 a day until he called parliament, which forced his hand to finally end personal rule with the calling of the Long Parliament.

Another reason for the breakdown of personal rule was the opposition from many parliament MPs, who opposed personal rule. After Charles introduced the Ship Money tax 1635, although it raised 98% of the tax, a 200,000 pounds a year, up to 1639, for 4 years, & saw the Sovereign of the seas created for 1 million pounds. Charles had been opposed by Hampden, who questioned the legality of the tax in 1638, Hampden had been judged as an unlawful claim & by a vote of 7-5 by the judges, causing him to be sent to the tower of London. However, the ~~indecisiveness~~ indecisiveness of the call on the legality of the tax caused its downturn with only 23% of the tax paid in 1639. The High Commission & Star Chamber, which were Charles' personal court to imprison those who opposed was seen as tyrannical & only raised opposition, as it was one of the first aspects of Charles' personal rule that was abolished in 1641 by the Long Parliament. Moreover, even Charles' However, the threat of the Scots in the bishops' cures were the greatest threat as Charles' financial policies overall proved ineffective, as the worst piece only collected half of its revenue from the force of Salisbury alone at 220,000 & upset many with the Distress of Knighthood, which raised 175,000 pounds, but lost him support from the landowners that were to become knights. Therefore, Charles needed the subsidies to finance war against the Scots.

Finally, the London reforms were strongly repelled by the English,

		Laud having become the archbishop of Canterbury in 1633 had imposed certain reforms & re-issued the Book of Sports, which had first been introduced in 1618, which was a very anti-Puritan document on the role of church on Scotland. Opposition to Laudian reforms could be seen in 1633 as the railings on the altar were torn down at St Gregory's Church. Moreover, opposition to Laud's attempts to eradicate Puritanism had been brewing since 1626 at the York House Conference, where Buckingham had already taken to anti-Arminianism & defended Richard Montagu. However, the opposition to Laudian reforms was never strong severe enough, with Laud travelling across England ensuring Wentworth's policy of thoroughness was correctly imposed by all parties, & hence the main opposition came from the Scots towards the Laudian reforms. Therefore, although the Laudian reforms in England had caused opposition to Arminianism in England to increase, it did not fundamentally cause the breakdown of personal rule. In conclusion, the Bishops' wars were certainly the final straw to Charles having to end personal rule, as he had to call parliament in order to finance the war against the Scots. Although, both Charles' financial policies in England & his enforcement of Laudian reforms would have contributed, they were not a catalyst, but instead brought the feeling of opposition to Charles, prepared for the outbreak of the first civil war in 1642.
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Assessment for learning



Assess questions require candidates not simply to list reasons but make supported judgements about the importance of those reasons.

Exemplar 2 was placed at the top of Level 5 at 16. The response has a sound overall judgement, but in order to get into level 6 the hints of interim judgements as to the importance of factors would need to be further developed.

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