

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

HISTORY A

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in History A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y107/01 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 Y107 series overview

Y107 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 Y107 is focused on the religious changes under Edward VI and the extent of opposition to those changes.

Question 1

Mid Tudor Crises 1547–1558

1 'There was widespread opposition to the religious changes under Edward VI.'

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

[30]

The majority of candidates were able to at least explain the four sources, although there were some responses that did not consider all the sources. Sources A and C presented the greatest challenge to candidates, but with Source C this was often due to a superficial reading of it. Source A offered a simple description of images being pulled down at the start of Edward's reign, with no clear evidence of opposition. However, some responses did not accept this and attempted to read more into the actual content and stated it showed opposition without providing any evidence to support their claims, however those who suggested that even if the source suggested there was not opposition outlined in the source, that further legislation was needed for the removal so perhaps there was resistance, whilst others pointed to the ease with which Mary restored images to argue a similar point. There was some detailed discussion of the provenance with many arguing that it was reliable as catholic writer would most likely have noted opposition. Some responses did note that this was at the start of the reign, and despite the claim of the source, may have had evidence solely from London and the South East, which were more Protestant. In discussing Source B most were able to explain that the demands were clear evidence of opposition, although some noted it was just from the South West. It was disappointing that responses were not aware of other religious disturbances in 1549 in Yorkshire and Oxfordshire, for example. Most were able to explain the demands, but were less secure on the provenance, apparently unaware that the grievances were the work of priests and therefore ignored many of the socio-economic grievances that candidates referenced. There was some confusion with Kett's rebellion over both the numbers and the seizure of Norwich, or even Exeter – which did not fall. Source C offered a more balanced view, but a significant number were unable to explain the opposition that it revealed, both in the passage with 'practised corrupt, untrue and superstitious ceremonies' and in the need for Parliament to issue an act. Provenance was usually sound in discussing the nature of the source. Source D was usually handled well with most explaining that it showed success and able to argue that because it was written by Edward's former tutor and a Protestant, writing to a fellow Protestant was likely to be supportive of the changes and ignore opposition.

Exemplar 1

1	Whilst Sources A and D wholly contradict the view, arguing arguing there was little opposition to Edward's religious policies, Source and Source C mostly opposes somewhat opposes it, Source B supports the view. However, Source C is the most convincing. Source C is the most convincing; ² it somewhat opposes the view as it shows the necessity of preventing opposition, however shows it was possible to ensure conformity through action in parliament. It depicts some opposition to Edward's changes through stating some continue to practise "superstitious ceremonies"; this is compelling as Edward was forced to strongly resist Mary's pleas to continue the Catholic mass, showing opposition, as well as the fact 2% of the population were recusants during his reign. However, the source shows opposition was able to be mitigated it as it states old Catholic books had to be abolished; this seems valid as the Act of Protestant Act of Uniformity dictated that the Bible in English had to be in every Church whilst a sermon was to be read aloud every Sunday, showing Edward's changes were able to be enforced. Weight is further added to the Source due to its origin as a Parliamentary Act, as this means its purpose was to legalise the King's will therefore presenting a reliable new account of his belief of the necessity to reduce opposition. Therefore, the source holds veracity in somewhat supporting opposing the view as despite describing some opposition
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it is clear this could be managed through parliament.

Source B provides the strongest argument that there was opposition to Edward's religious changes as it displays the Western Rebel's demands for the old religion, although it is somewhat unconvincing. It states that the rebels wanted images set up in churches again: this is convincing as while supervising the removal of images and iconoclasm due to these changes, Commissioner William Body was killed in Cornwall, showing opposition to these changes. Adding to this is the description of the desire for a Latin mass, as weight is added by the Rebellion being sparked after priests used the new Book of Common Prayer in English at a Whitsunday ~~san~~ service. However, when considering the Source's authorship it is rendered less convincing; as the demands were written by literate priests they may have been likely to emphasise religious opposition, instead of other causes of the rebellion such as the new sheep tax, making this view of opposition less valid. Furthermore, as Cornwall was traditionally a Catholic stronghold this may not indicate widespread opposition. Therefore the source supports the view but is less convincing as it may not be typical view throughout England.

Source A opposes the statement, and is mostly convincing in its view that there was little opposition as it describes changes being implemented radically even

at the start of Edward's reign. It states that visitations led to images being pulled down; this seems valid as Edward's religious changes led to iconoclasm and altars being stripped showing enthusiasm for the changes. This is further supported by the Source's depiction of churches even in small parishes being stripped back, ~~convinced~~ a convincing view as the 1547 Charties Act even removed payments for masses for the souls of the dead, leaving these bare as they were not supported by scriptures: evidently as this was enforced opposition must have been limited or ineffectual. The source's provenance adds further weight; as a Catholic author ~~may have~~ may have been reluctant to acknowledge the success and efficiency of Edward's changes, which the source nonetheless does. However, as it ~~was written~~ in 1547 describes events in 1547, before Edward's more radical changes, it ~~is~~ is therefore only a useful account of the lack of opposition at the start of Edward's reign, and thus remains less useful than Source C.

Source D also opposes the view that there was widespread religious opposition as it describes the success of Edward's changes by the end of his reign, although is partially unconvincing in its view. It describes the success of the King in implementing Protestantism, that he "repealed the Act of Six Articles"; this is somewhat compelling as despite this repeal taking England back to the Protestant

		10 Articles of 1536, the King's untimely death prevented Cranmer's 42 Articles from being passed, which would have secured the Church of England's doctrine as Protestant. The source continues that Edward had little opposition as he published "good and pious homilies"; this is valid as Cranmer's 1547 Book of Homilies and Paraphrases proved a success as it was even accepted by the conservative Gardiner, showing little opposition. However, as the source depicts a letter to a Swiss reformer, the author may have wished to emphasise the success of changes to please their audience, as despite new laws, only 80% of wills in Kent were written in the Protestant fashion by Edward's death, the year in which the source was written, showing there may indeed have been some opposition. Therefore the source is partially convincing in its strongly opposing view ^{argument} that there was little opposition. ^{instead}
		Overall, Source C is the most convincing in its depiction of some opposition, as demonstrated by some continued Catholic worship, but nonetheless mostly conformity as Parliament passed this Protestant Act, showing partial opposition to the view. Whilst Sources A and D offer some valid insights in opposing the view, and B supports the view in depicting strong opposition in some areas, namely concerning Cornwall, Source C is the most convincing due to its provenance of a parliamentary act, and being written in 1549 when

		many significant changes were passed. Admittedly, Q A and
		D provide a useful contrast in view of different religious
		beliefs, who both conclude there was little opposition, however,
		C, as a government document is more useful as its
		aim was to react to the present state of affairs.

Exemplar 1 provides an example of a script where there is some judgement about the sources in relation to the question and was therefore placed in Level 5 at 22 marks.

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.

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 Y107, the candidates were asked to consider Elizabeth's management of faction and in the second question analyse the threats to her in the period after 1588.

Question 2*

Elizabethan England

2* How successfully did Elizabeth I use and manage faction?

[20]

There were only a limited number of responses to this question, and of those, most had only a limited understanding of what was meant by the term. A number wrote about parliament, while others considered the struggle between Catholics and Puritans to be evidence of faction. Those that did address the question often found it difficult to address the issue of how successfully and instead explained the factional conflicts, often focusing on Cecil v Dudley, Leicester v Howards and Cecil's domination in the latter years of Elizabeth's rule. The question was taken directly from Key Topic 2 and focused on the issue in the specification 'Elizabeth's use and management of faction'.

Misconception



Limited understanding of a key term – faction. This has also been seen in the past with terms such as Parliament and Privy Council which are all essential for questions on this Key Topic.

Question 3*

3* 'Essex's rebellion was the most serious threat to Elizabeth I in the period from 1588 to 1603.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

Most candidates attempted this question and there were a full range of answers. Less successful responses wrote about issues outside the period, often citing the plots surrounding Mary Queen of Scots or Mary herself as threats, while others thought the Essex rebellion involved Mary. Knowledge of the Essex rebellion was patchy and while most could write, often at length, about the causes, they could not explain the seriousness or otherwise of it. There were only a few who were aware of its actual location, the numbers involved and the ease with which it was put down. Knowledge and the threat of Tyrone's rebellion was stronger and many argued this was the greater threat given the numbers, Spanish support, length, cost and difficulty in crushing it as seen at Yellowford. Other threats that were discussed included the Armada, and again this was often handled well with a balanced discussion about the Spanish threat and the difficulties of actually picking up Parma's forces. Similarly, there was often good discussion about the threats posed by social and economic issues and the difficulty this presented to Elizabeth as they were largely impossible to resolve and this factor was often linked to the Oxfordshire rising, where a number argued that Elizabeth's response suggested it was a threat. There were also discussions in some responses about the problems Elizabeth faced in parliament over monopolies, but most argued this was resolved through the Golden Speech.

Exemplar 2

3	I would largely disagree with the statement that the Essex Rebellion of 1601 was the most serious threat to Elizabeth I between 1588-1603, as I would say that the Essex rebellion was a symptom of a much greater threat posed by the foreign situation with Spain and Ireland.
	The Essex Rebellion of 1601 cannot be deemed the most serious threat to Elizabeth because it of its lack of public support and failure to cause ^{cause} the ^{the} serious instability within England. It also cannot be the greatest threat as it was directly caused by a more serious threat posed by Ireland and Spain. Robert Devereaux, the Earl of Essex, was young, brash and desperate when he was sent to Ireland against his will in 1599. Despite being sent with a large force of 16,000, he was recalcitrant and wished to return to England, so led a small ^{of 4000} antagonist ^{antagonist} force to attempt to negotiate peace with Tyrone - against Elizabeth's express wishes. When he returned to England early and against Elizabeth's instructions in 1600, she punished him by revoking his monopoly on sweet wines, depriving him of income and the ability to support his faction at court. Increasingly desperate and alienated, he attempted to stage a rebellion to overthrow Elizabeth. Although he had once enjoyed naive popularity in London following the 1596 Cadiz expedition, by the

grossly overestimated his popularity and only amassed 300 supporters for his rebellion. Such a small force was easily suppressed, and 6 were executed, including Essex. This lack of public support and inability to effect change illustrates how the Essex rebellion itself was not ~~a~~ ~~as~~ the most serious threat to Elizabeth.

Rather, the Essex rebellion highlights how the foreign situation was the greatest threat, as it was beginning to affect political stability at home. Tyrone's rebellion, once localised to the Pale and tribal Gaelic territories, was ~~beginning~~ ~~was~~ causing direct ~~local~~ ~~on~~ effects, showing how foreign threats were hindering stability in Elizabeth's government. Whilst Essex posed no tangible threat to Elizabeth's crown, the open revolt of one of her favourites seriously crippled her image and authority as monarch. Furthermore, the execution of Essex led the Cecil faction to dominate Court and the privy council in its entirety, therefore signalling an era where Elizabeth had far less control of faction than ^{she had} previously enjoyed. Tyrone's rebellion, which caused the Essex rebellion, acted as a microcosm for the spiralling problems that characterised the late years - financial chaos, political instability, and the looming threat of Catholic Spain. Whilst the rebellion was Irish nationalist in nature

Philip II Spain began to realise the convenient role which Ireland could play in facilitating the invasion of England. The failure of the 1588 Spanish armada had been largely due to the weather, caused by rough seas in the Bay of Biscay, the English Channel and the North Sea. Ireland could therefore be used as an intermediary landing ground from which to then stage an invasion, and Ireland and Spain shared a common interest against England. In 1602, this potential threat was realised to Elizabeth's rule was realised when a Spanish force of 4,000 landed at Kinsale in Ireland to assist the rebel forces. Fortunately, the impact of this threat was limited by the swift and decisive action of Lord Mountjoy, whose 12,000 men defeated the Spanish force. Nevertheless, this does not negate the serious threat that the Irish-Spanish alliance posed to Elizabeth's rule through a potential Spanish invasion launched from Ireland with the aid of Tyrone.

Finally, the foreign situation also posed a greater threat than the Essex Rebellion due to its wider impact on England and government, namely through the cost of war. War ruined Elizabeth's carefully created financial reputation, which had seen prudent saving and limited expenditure and allowed her to eradicate the Marian debt of £227,000 by 1576, and establish a surplus

of £300,000 by 1584. However, the ~~£4.7~~ £4.5 million that totalled the cost of Holland, France, Spain and Ireland was too great for this surplus to bear. Financial stability was dependent on disengagement from war, as Elizabeth attempted to ~~recreate~~ ^{recreate} moderate modern spending on a medieval financial system. Only 1/2 of this sum could be covered through parliamentary taxation and the surplus, leaving a huge deficit. The ^{frequent} requests for finance from Parliament also opened up discussions that infringed upon the royal prerogative, signalling the ~~under~~ long shadow of the foreign situation - inflicting damage to Elizabeth's control and authority over her government. Issues of purveyance and monopolies were attacked readily in Parliament due to their exacerbation of preexisting socio-economic issues such as price increases on essential goods, but due to the cost of war Elizabeth was increasingly reluctant or unable to maintain ^{control of} court and faction. Therefore, the foreign situation was of far greater severity to Elizabeth's reign 1588-1603 because it prompted the deterioration of a functional government through the financial issues that arose from the cost of war.

Overall, the Essex Rebellion was symptomatic of greater political problems caused by the war with Spain. Spain infiltrated and increased the threat posed by Tyrone's rebels,

		causing political repercussions and triggering the Essex Rebellion. Essex's revolt signified a part of played a key part in the acceleration breakdown of Elizabeth's authority and control of government which had been set into motion from the beginning of the war with Spain. Therefore I disagree with the statement, and would instead argue that foreign threats were of greater severity in the threat they posed to Elizabeth 1588-1605.
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Exemplar 2 was placed in Level 6 and awarded 18 marks, showing a well-developed and supported overall judgement with some interim judgements.

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