

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

HISTORY A

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in History A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y106/01 Summer 2025 series

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper Y106 series overview	4
Section A overview	5
Question 1	5
Section B overview	12
Question 2*	12
Question 3*	17

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 Y106 series overview

Y106 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 Y106 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 a number of 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, further legislation during Edward's reign was needed for the removal so perhaps there was resistance, while 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. Some 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		The four sources present differing views on the ext extent of opposition to the religious changes under Edward VI. Sources B and C suggest there was widespread opposition, whilst sources A and D both indicate opposition was limited. Source B supports the view that there was widespread opposition to religious changes under Edward VI. It states that there were demands for the Six Articles 'to be in use again' and indicates opposition to the 1549 Prayer Book. This can be supported by the fact that the restoration of the Six Articles was a demand of the Western Rebels. Furthermore, they marched under the banner of the five wounds of Christ and there was fighting at a Bodmin boys school between those who supported the 'old' versus 'new' religion. This indicates that there was significant opposition to Edward's religious changes. However, the source can also be challenged by the fact that many of the rebels' demands also concerned the economy, as rumours were spread about the extension of the taxes of sheep being extended to geese and pigs which concerned them, and as they pre-empted further action against enclosures, as indicating
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that opposition was not just because of ~~Henry~~ Edward's religious changes, but also due to economic factors, as well as class hostility as people at Bodmin shouted 'kill the gentleman'. The provenance ~~somewhat~~ strengthens the source in supporting the view of the question in some ways, as it is an account of the demands of the rebels, therefore ^{accurately} reflects their views, and as it was written in 1549, it indicates opposition 2 years into the reign. ^{highlighting it as an ongoing issue} However, the provenance also undermines the source in other ways as there ~~are~~ were only 5000 western rebels, so ~~the~~ meaning the source cannot support the view that opposition was 'widespread'. ^{as it does not reflect the views of the entire country} Ultimately, the source supports the view in the question but is limited partially by the provenance which means it is unable to demonstrate 'widespread' opposition.

Source C also supports the view that there was widespread opposition to religious changes under Edward VI. It states that there were 'still practised corrupt, untrue and superstitious ceremonies'. This can be supported by the fact that 2 Acts of Uniformity were required, with the second one ~~threatened~~ threatening imprisonment for those who didn't attend church.

on Sundays, ^{and they} were required to get people to accept the Prayer Book and protestant ideas indicating widespread opposition. ^{as people didn't willingly initially follow the Prayer Book} Furthermore, the Black Rubric that denied that kneeling implied adoration supports the idea that people were not conforming to protestant ideals, ^{as they were kneeling} highlighting opposition to religious changes under Edward VI. The weight of the source in supporting the view in the question is increased by the provenance. As it was an Act that was passed in 1549, after the introduction of the Prayer Book, the need for an Act highlights the way in which the population were opposed to protestant changes. It also indicates widespread opposition as an Act ~~is~~ affects the entire country. Ultimately, source C supports the view that there was widespread opposition to religious changes under Edward VI and it is strengthened by the provenance.

Source A does not support the view that there was widespread opposition to Edward VI's religious changes. It states that 'images were pulled down' and churches were 'white-limed' which indicates acceptance of Edward VI's protestant changes. However, this can be challenged by the Order of November 1550 which stated that altars were

to be taken down, which indicates some opposition as the population had not already taken them down. Despite this, the provenance strengthens the source in opposing the view that there was widespread opposition to the religious changes under Edward VI. This is because it refers to 1547, at the beginning of Edwards reign, and states that there was acceptance even then, suggesting limitations to opposition as it was prior to the Prayer Book and other significant doctrine, ~~this so~~ indicating the public followed changes willingly. Ultimately, Source A opposes the view that there was widespread opposition to Edwards religious changes and this opposition is strengthened by the provenance.

Source D also does not support the view that there was widespread opposition to the religious changes under Edward VI. It states that Edward accomplished ~~a~~ a 'very great amount' and suggest that England had been reformed to be completely Protestant. This can be supported by the fact that, whilst they were not implemented due to Edwards death, the ~~42~~ 42 Articles outlined Protestant Doctrine, supporting the idea that England was Protestant by Edwards death therefore suggesting limited opposition. However, the source can be challenged by the

fact that Mary's ^{October} 1553 Act of Repeal reversed all of Edwards changes, and Mary was widely accepted by the English population. This indicates that the ^{general} population of England largely hadn't accepted Edwards religious changes, indicating there was opposition and countering the view of the source. The weight of the source in opposing the view in the question is reduced by the provenance. As it was written by a Protestant reformer, he would have exaggerated the extent of Protestant reform and diminished the extent of opposition. This renders the source less valuable in opposing the view in the question. ~~But~~ Ultimately, source D opposes the view that there was widespread opposition to the religious changes under Edward VI but it is weakened by the provenance.

Overall, sources B and C support the view in the question, whilst sources A and D oppose it. Whilst source B is partially limited by the provenance, source C is strengthened by it and source D is significantly weakened by it. Therefore, ultimately, the sources support the view in the question.

Exemplar 1 is a good example of an answer that was placed at the top of Level 5 with 25 marks as there is clear evidence of both good knowledge and provenance, but most importantly judgements about the validity of the sources and the extent to which they can be trusted in supporting or challenging the view.

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 Y106, the candidates were asked to analyse two issues central to the reign of Henry VIII, the first focusing on the King's 'Great Matter' and its role in the fall of Wolsey and the second question focusing on foreign policy in the 1540s.

Question 2*

England 1485–1547

2* How important was Wolsey's failure to achieve a divorce for Henry VIII in his fall from power? [20]

This was the most popular question and while most candidates were able to identify a number of reasons, and most attempted to argue that the failure to obtain a divorce was the most important reason, some still did not explain clearly why this was the case. Many responses wrote in great detail about why Wolsey was unable to obtain a divorce, citing issues such as the papal position, but did not explain why the issue was so important that it led to his fall and, as a result often produced a partial answer that left them in Level 3. The most successful answers explained that the very phrase, 'the King's Great Matter' went a long way to explaining why it was so important and why Wolsey's failure, having stated it would be easy, was crucial in his fall. Other issues that were discussed and used to explain why it led to his fall were the need for a male heir, Catherine of Aragon's age, and his love for Anne Boleyn and her refusal to be his mistress. These issues were, in the strongest answers weighed up against foreign policy failures, the failure of the Amicable Grant, his lack of noble support and faction. However, most argued that although some of these lost him support and perhaps the confidence of the king, many, such as the Amicable Grant, took place years before his fall and therefore it was difficult to argue they were the most important. Similarly, strong responses noted that he had difficulties with the nobility throughout his time in office and again it did not lead to his fall, rather they took advantage of his failure to obtain the divorce to gain revenge. The same, it could be argued was true of the Boleyns, it is unlikely that they would have been concerned to remove him if he had obtained the divorce. Less successful candidates spent too long discussing issues such as foreign policy in the 1510s and early 1520s or his domestic reforms without clearly explaining how they brought about his fall. Many responses argued that the chronology and timing of events point towards the divorce as the most important reason. It was disappointing that a significant number of candidates thought that Wolsey was executed and seemed unaware that he died on his way to London, and there were also some who thought Wolsey fell in the 1530s and wrote about the Act of Supremacy.

Exemplar 2

		There were a range of factors which contributed to
		Wolsey's fall from power, and although many of these did
		contribute to him losing support from the nobles and the
		King himself, making his fall more likely, ultimately

Wolsey's failure to achieve a divorce for Henry VIII was the most important cause which triggered his fall. His failures in foreign policy did also contribute to his fall, as well as the steadily declining support for Wolsey amongst the nobility particularly due to his legal reforms, however ~~the~~ his failure to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon ^{remains} ~~was~~ the ~~most~~ crucial failure which solidified his fall.

~~Wolsey's~~ Wolsey's failure to achieve a divorce for Henry VIII was the most important reason for his fall from power, as Henry desperately wanted it to succeed as quickly as possible, and Wolsey did not facilitate this desire. For Henry, annulling his marriage so that he could marry Anne Boleyn was of integral importance as she was refusing to sleep with him until they married, and he needed to have a male heir to ensure his succession, which he was becoming increasingly convinced that Catherine could not provide. It became Henry's most central aim, and Wolsey's ~~failure~~ ^{failure} to persuade the pope to allow it led to Henry quickly losing faith in him. The divorce proceedings were slow and ~~was~~ unsuccessful as the Legatine court took seven months to meet at Blackfriars, and Campeggio was under instruction by the Pope not to reach a judgement one way or the other. The Pope was also being controlled by Charles who would not allow the divorce to proceed as Catherine was his aunt and he would not see her humiliated, so despite all Wolsey's attempts to manoeuvre the situation in Henry's favour, such as translating Levisius to

invalidate the marriage due to Arthur's previous marriage to Catherine, it was in vain. Henry blamed Wolsey for this failure, and needed to search for another advisor who could efficiently and effectively deal with this enormous issue, fittingly known as 'the King's Great Matter'. Therefore, because the divorce became Henry's most important aim, and Wolsey was unable to help him achieve it, Wolsey quickly lost Henry's favour and cemented his fall from power.

However, there were also longer standing reasons that Wolsey began to lose favour with Henry and eventually fell from power, such as his failures in foreign policy, which were largely disappointing to Henry. Even his supposed successes, such as the Treaty of London or Treaty of Universal Peace in 1518 were shallow agreements which allowed Wolsey to bask in temporary success but actually had little impact on foreign affairs. Diplomatic events orchestrated by Wolsey, such as at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520, were similarly hollow - this extremely extravagant occasion cost Henry's treasury almost an entire year's income of £100,000, but achieved nothing of material significance, and actually increased tensions as ~~the~~ Henry and Francis did not get along and simply participated to outdo one another, also increasing tensions with Charles who perceived that Francis was being favoured. Finally, Wolsey's extreme failure with the 1525 Amicable Grant can be seen as a significant contributor to Wolsey's fall, as this misjudged tax failed to enable Henry's foreign policy aim of conquering France, raising

only £27,000 of the £100,000 required, and spending uncut as poor harvests left the people unable and unwilling to pay that or the previous 1523 subsidy, both of which Wolsey had to back-track on. Therefore, Wolsey's failures to achieve anything of lasting success in foreign policy can be seen as a reason for his fall from power, however should not be seen as the key cause or trigger, because Henry did still enjoy the glory of being recognised as a peacemaker and king able to enjoy lavish festivities, even if they were not politically valuable. Overall Wolsey's failure to achieve a divorce for Henry can still be seen as more important, as this was a direct trigger which provoked his fall, although Wolsey's foreign policy failures may have helped to provide some basis for this as he had not been consistently successful in enabling Henry to achieve his other aims.

Finally, Wolsey's lack of support from the nobility can be considered a key reason for his fall from power, however it was not as important as his failure to achieve Henry's divorce. Many nobles inherently disliked Wolsey due to his lowly beginnings as a butcher's son and entry to the church as it was the closest thing to a meritocracy. ~~His~~ During his time in power, Wolsey made laws which challenged noble power, such as in 1516 when he passed an act at the Star Chamber which decreed that the nobility must not believe themselves to be above the law, and they would be punished accordingly for their crimes. That same day, Northumberland was charged with contempt of court, demonstrating Wolsey's reforms which did not favour

the nobles. Furthermore, he also introduced the Tudor subsidy which taxed nobles more heavily by conducting a more accurate assessment of the wealth of the English taxpayer. Therefore, the nobles did not strongly support Wolsey, and their influence in the courts may have contributed to his fall from power, with ~~however, this cannot be~~ policies such as the Eltham Ordinances also increasing their dislike of him as ~~they~~ by increasing the efficiency of the Royal Household, Wolsey relied less on calling Parliament to finance policy, decreasing the influence of the nobility. The rise of the conservative faction at court therefore did not help Wolsey's maintenance of power. However, this cannot be seen as the most important reason for Wolsey's fall because the thing that was most important to his grasp of power was the support of the King ^{himself}, which was largely unimpacted by the views of the nobility, meaning that Wolsey's failure to achieve a divorce for Henry VIII can still be seen as the most important cause of his fall from power, as it directly decreased ~~the~~ Henry's faith in Wolsey's abilities, and led him to seek ~~council~~ ^{assistance} elsewhere.

In conclusion, Wolsey's failure to achieve a divorce for Henry VIII was largely important in his fall from power. While other factors such as his failures in foreign policy and poor relations with the nobility may have started Wolsey's decline in favour, the divorce was the most crucial, direct trigger, as it was Henry's personal support which was most important in allowing Wolsey to stay secure in his power, and this was affected most greatly by his failure to achieve the divorce, making it by far the most

2

important reason for Wolsey's fall from power and loss of favour in Henry's eyes.

This example was awarded Level 6, 18 marks, as there is evidence of full analysis and consistent focus with a well-supported judgement and evidence of interim judgements.

Misconception



Wolsey was not executed, and he fell in 1529 not in the 1530s, therefore the Act of Supremacy and Cromwell's work is irrelevant.

Question 3*

3* How successful was Henry VIII's foreign policy in the 1540s?

[20]

Although this question was less popular, there were still a significant number of responses, many of which were well-focused and showed detailed analysis. Less successful responses were confused about the actual events, with some focusing on his earlier years or drifting to domestic policy and Ireland. The more successful answers considered his policy towards France, Scotland, the Cleves marriage and relations with the Habsburgs. Perhaps naturally it was the first two of these that dominated, and arguments weighed up the military successes at Solway Moss and Boulogne against the financial cost and impact on the economy. The more successful responses identified his aims in the opening paragraph, often stressing his desire for military glory, securing the dynasty and claiming the French throne, arguing that while the first one was achieved, the others weren't. Those who discussed the Cleves marriage noted that it was only successful in the very short term of providing allies against a possible Catholic crusade, while discussions around the improvement in relations with the Habsburgs brought little positive gains.

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