

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

HISTORY A

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in History A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y105/01 Summer 2025 series

Contents

Introduction3

Paper Y105 series overview4

Section A overview5

 Question 15

Section B overview12

 Question 2*12

 Question 3*18

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 Y105 series overview

Y105 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.

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](#).

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 Y105 is focused on the Duke of York's reaction to the birth of Henry VI's son.

Question 1

Wars of the Roses 1445–1461

1 'Richard, Duke of York's reaction to the birth of Henry VI's heir demonstrated his loyalty.'

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

Although the sources did not make direct reference to York's actual reaction, nearly all candidates were able to make inferences from the sources and apply relevant contextual knowledge to test the views in the four sources. The vast majority of candidates argued that Sources A and B suggested that York was loyal, while Source D suggested he was not, with Source C offering material that could be used to support both sides of the argument. In analysing the sources most argued that he did not exploit the situation and that he saved the realm with his financial measures and the temporary removal of Somerset, who A described as 'evil'. Responses also noted that York ruled honourably and gave up the king's sword and had responded to calls from magnates to take up the reins of power. In analysing D many commented that actions of disloyalty were much later and even then, events such as the Dartford coup could be seen as anti-Somerset and not against Henry or his heir and that actions of disloyalty came only after the Parliament of Devils. In discussing the provenance of these three sources comments about London supporting the Yorkists and D being written by Margaret of Anjou to try and rally London took evaluation beyond basic comments about chronicles. However, Source C was the most challenging and more successful responses did pick up on the balanced nature, commenting on York's arrival with men in 'jackets, helmets and other armour' and on the size of the force which suggested possible action and contrasted that with his arrival being three months after the birth, which suggested he was not intent on taking action. Comments about the provenance of this source also varied, with many able to provide contextual knowledge as to why the Pastons had become pro-Yorkist and therefore criticism of York might suggest that their views are more valid.

The example below provides a good example of a response that reaches Level 5 as there is full analysis based on the provenance of the sources in the conclusion, focusing on the reliability of the sources and not the contextual knowledge or simply summarising the views in the sources. As a result, it was awarded 22 marks.

Exemplar 1

1	Overall, the sources show support for the view that the Duke of York's reaction to the birth of Henry VI's heir demonstrated his loyalty. Indeed, Source A shows the strongest support suggesting York fulfilled all the duties requested of him to serve the Crown, while Source D shows the weakest support and disagrees with the statement, rather painting York as a malicious plotter who seeks the Crown rather than a loyal subject.
	Source A most supports the view in the question as it suggests that York was a passive selfless helper of the crown and that was his noble reaction to the birth of Henry's heir with 'parliament [making] the Duke of York lieutenant of the realm'. This claim is validated by the fact that the Duke of Somerset was much hated for his French losses in Normandy during his tenure in France in 1450 (making the magnates) and others, view York as the more favourable protector at the time of Henry's first breakdown before his son's birth. In fact, Somerset's home in Blackfriars was burned down and parliament had wanted to impeach him for his French losses. However, while the source is potentially potentially well informed and

was contemporary to these events, it is weakened by its provenance as being based on ~~events~~ from London which was a Yorkist stronghold. Thus the ~~strictly~~ ~~partisan~~ likely partisan phrases such as Somerset as an 'evil man' and being 'feared' may have been strongly influenced by London's Yorkist ~~to~~ support. Thus the source overall suggests York was the necessary loyal figure who's ~~was~~ loyal reaction of stepping in as lieutenant of the realm following the birth of Henry VI's heir demonstrates his loyalty.

Moreover, Source B shows ~~strong~~ support a great extent of support ~~as~~, once again the Duke of York is depicted as the honourable, temporary ruler of England showing his loyalty after Henry VI's heir was born and who captured Somerset as prisoner as part of his duties. Indeed, York was 'committed to the tower' after Norfolk claimed he had committed treason and Somerset was only released from the tower on the orders of Henry VI upon recovering around a month earlier. Thus York peacefully 'ceased to be protector' showing his loyalty to the King after Henry's heir was born. While the source

was written in London, its provenance still strengthens it. This is due to the tone being mainly impartial to either side and the strict abiding to descriptions and dates of events. Thus overall, the source does indeed support the ~~statement~~ view as York remained loyal and stepped down from ruling when required with minimal interference with the King's choices.

Source C provides the weakest support for the statement it paints the Yorkists arrival in London with military focused details and such as 'helmets and other armour' as well as suggesting that '1,000 men' were also waiting on the Yorkists. This suggests that Henry VI did not come to London completely peacefully, although he did remain loyal to the king and crown after the birth of Henry. This anticipates the fear York and his allies such as Warwick will feel in 1455 when Henry VI held court in York and Hull and York didn't go fleeing on ambush, despite not ever harming either Henry VI or his heir during both of his reigns. Indeed, Lancastrians such as Margaret and

Somerset had wanted to rule with Margaret wanting a regency following her son's birth thus suggesting it was rather Lancastrian threat which led to this show of military strength by York, despite him remaining loyal to Henry and heir and having a protective reaction towards the kingdom upon his birth. The source is strengthened by its provenance as the Paston letters were written by the Paston family who did not participate in the Wars of the Roses and thus had remained impartial when describing events. Indeed, the nature of the source being a letter shows that there was no motive to present either York or his allies in an overly glorified way.

Finally, Source D ~~shows~~ does not support the view that York's reaction showed his loyalty ~~after~~ to the king after the birth of Henry VI's child suggesting instead that York broke 'oaths' of allegiance and plotted to destroy the king rather than remaining loyal. ~~However~~ This source is ~~weakened~~ ^{strengthened} by York's 1460 Act of Accord which disinherited Henry's son and York had

claimed that no one ~~to~~ "in the realm was 'as worthy as' himself in terms of taking the throne. This did indeed break his oaths of loyalty and allegiance such as that of 1455 at the 'bat' battle of St Albans as well as destroyed the peace Henry had attempted to make through the 'Love Day' of 1458 showing little loyalty to the crown ~~of~~ Henry's heir himself, but rather an ambitious reaction to Henry's weakness and the birth of his heir. The source is, however, weakened by the source's purpose and that it was written to 'rally support in London' and thus Margaret of Anjou uses ~~part~~ strongly partisan language and a wrathful tone which weakens the ~~the~~ evil image she is trying to paint for York as she was trying to garner Lancastrian support at the cost of ruining the late duke of York's reputation.

All in all, the sources support the statement that York's reaction to the birth of Henry VI's heir demonstrated his loyalty. Source A shows the

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 Y105, the candidates were asked to analyse the problems and challenges facing Edward IV in his first reign and Henry VII.

Question 2*

England 1461–1509

2* Assess the causes of unrest in England during Edward IV's first rule (1461–1470). **[20]**

This was the more popular question, and most responses were able to explain two or three reasons why there was unrest during his first rule. However, some drew information from his second rule, while others used the fact there was rebellion to argue it was a cause of unrest rather than explaining the causes of the rebellions. The most common causes discussed were the impact of Warwick and Edward's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville and the resulting consequences. However, other issues discussed included his policy towards the Lancastrians and his failure to kill Henry when captive, the actions of Margaret of Anjou and Louis and the general economic problems in the country. A significant number of responses argued that Warwick was the most important reason and linked this to a range of other issues, including supporting Margaret, the impact of the Woodville marriage and foreign policy issues, which allowed them to produce a convincing judgement of him underpinning all the problems, as well as his own greed. However, some argued that it was Edward's policies as his marriage, policy of conciliation towards the Lancastrians and his foreign policy created unrest.

Exemplar 2

2		During Edward IV's first rule many factors led to causes of unrest which eventually deposed Edward in 1470. The actions of the Earl of Warwick being greedy and eventually causing the removal of Edward, presents him as implicit to disaster. Edward's reaction control over the nobility and actions marriage to Elizabeth Woodville cause further unrest. Foreign intervention presented itself as a constant struggle for Edward causing unrest through his whole rule. Arguably, Foreign intervention was the main reason for unrest in the period exacerbated by Warwick's actions. Edward IV had a good relationship with the new King of France Louis XI as he aided him at the Battle of Tewkesbury with financial backing. This friendship can also be seen in 1463 when Louis XI ended French aid to Lancastrians in Scotland respecting Edward as the new King. However, relations worsened in the period as Louis XI stated how England had chosen a Burgundian alliance in 1468 over a French alliance. This caused Louis to aid Margaret of Anjou's actions and Warwick's actions in forcing removing Edward from the throne, bringing the pair together in July 1470. He provided 12,000 troops
---	--	--

to Margaret of Anjou and recognised Henry VI as the true king of England, allowing Margaret to create a court for Henry at St Michael in Bere. Louis XI underpins other unrest in England as he aided the Lincolnshire rising of 1470 to allow Warwick to try remove Edward. Further examples of foreign powers being a cause of unrest for Edward's first rule was the large scale Scottish attack on England in 1467. James III aided Margaret, Henry VI and other Lancastrian supporters figures to attack England with 15,000 troops. They soon fled after seeing the Earl of Warwick's army but still caused unrest on the northern border for the first 3 years of Edward's rule. This factor underpins the other ~~to further~~ as foreign intervention aided Warwick's actions and forced Edward to eventually flee.

The Earl of Warwick had been a prolific figure in the Wars of the Roses leading the Yorkist army at Northampton and forming an alliance with Richard Duke of York in 1453. However, once Edward ascended to the throne he neglected Warwick believing him to be loyal. Warwick wished for power in Wales which was instead given to William Harbott in 1461 alongside the

		Earl of Pembroke. Warwick was attempting to arrange a marriage between Edward IV and Anne of Burgundy, the French Princess, which could have boosted foreign relations. However, Edward married Elizabeth of Woodville making Warwick's attempts futile. This links to foreign intervention as the failed arranged marriage could have stopped Louis XI from attempting to remove Edward, if he had become a relative of his. Warwick caused unrest in 1469 when he implicitly caused the Yorkshire rising to disband Edward so he could remove Edward him. Warwick's loss of status acts as a catalyst for Edward's loss of the throne as his attempts to remove Edward are successful in 1470 as Edward flees to Burgundy. Without Warwick's actions the civil unrest may not have been so apparent however without the foreign aid Warwick received his actions wouldn't have been as severe to Edward's rule as they were. Edward's actions in regards to the nobility in his first rule can also be argued as a cause for unrest. Edward's secret marriage to Elizabeth Woodville not only affected his relationship with Warwick but also weakened his connection to the nobility. Many Yorkist loyalists such as Buckingham and Hastings resented the marriage as Elizabeth had previously been married to
--	--	--

		Sir John Grey a prolific Lancastrian who died at the Second Battle of St Albans. Edward also struggled to reward ex-Lancastrians for loyalty as he had inherited £372,000 of debt from Henry VI making it difficult to reward loyalty through financial means. Edward raised war for her with Scotland (1462) and France (1468) but pocketed around £25,000 from both but not actually using the money for her. This damaged his connection with the nobility and the common leading Edward's support base and making it easier for his opponent to flourish in the late 1460s. Edward had removed Lord Marmaguis title of the Earl of Northumberland later giving it to the Percys. Lord Marmaguis (Warwick's brother) resented this and joined sides with Warwick in 1469, removing Edward from the throne. Warwick's actions causing discontent in the late 60s exacerbate Edward's actions towards the nobility as it provided Warwick with a group of men who resented Edward due to Marmaguis and Hastings. However, without foreign aid Warwick's actions wouldn't have been as apparent which links the small degree of unrest back to foreign intervention. Overall, while Edward saw a variation of unrest during his first rule the over-
--	--	--

		arching factor which caused these levels of
		unrest stem back to the foreign invasion
		as both Scotland and France had a hand
		in causing unrest. Warwick's actions act as
		a catalyst for the unrest as his eventual
		betrayal exacerbates the crisis ^{discontent} seen in late
		1460's. While Edward's mistakes breed the
		mobility provided a support base for the
		different levels of unrest.

Exemplar 2 is a response that reached Level 6 and was awarded 18 marks as not only was there an overall judgement, but also some interim judgements about the factors discussed, providing a full analysis and focused response which was well-supported.

Assessment for learning



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

Question 3*

- 3* 'Henry VII's limited claim to the throne was the most important factor undermining his rule in England during the years from 1485 to 1509.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

As with Question 2, there were a number of factors that were discussed in evaluating the extent to which Henry's limited claim to the throne was the most important factor. Many responses began by explaining his limited claim and the impact it had in undermining his rule, but what was most unexpected was the failure to link this to the issue of Pretenders who were able to take advantage of this. Instead, many responses explained the Pretender issue as a separate point and moreover there were many who did not see the serious challenge posed by Simnel who took Henry to battle at East Stoke and came close to succeeding in toppling him. There were other responses that did not discuss the general Yorkist threat from the de la Poles or from Margaret of Burgundy, even if she was mentioned in passing when discussing the Pretenders. Other issues discussed included the nobility and the need for Henry to have a large number under bonds or attainder. Responses also considered the foreign threat and the extent to which that undermined his rule, although the most successful answers noted that he was largely able to overcome this with a range of marriages and treaties. There were responses which actually argued that his rule was not undermined as many wanted peace and that he did pass on his throne securely to his son, something not seen since the death of Henry V. In challenging the statement responses discussed his marriage to Elizabeth, the dating of his reign and the dislike for Richard. Once again there was much candidates could discuss, but what was important was the quality of analysis and supporting judgements that were reached.

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.