

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

HISTORY A

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in History A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y308/01 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 Y308 series overview

Y308 is one of twenty-one units for Paper 3 of the A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of at least one hundred years through an interpretation question on a named in-depth topic and through two essays.

The paper is divided into two sections. In Section A candidates are required to use contextual knowledge to test the views of two historians about one of the three named in-depth topics or an aspect of one. The question does not require them to comment on the style of writing or the provenance of the interpretation.

In Section B candidates are required to answer two essay questions from a choice of three.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- showed a clear understanding of the views of the two interpretations in relation to the question - were able to use contextual knowledge to test the interpretations, linking that knowledge directly to the interpretation through evaluative words - were able to consider both the strengths and limitations of both interpretations using contextual knowledge - covered the whole period in a balanced way - adopted a thematic approach - made links and comparisons between aspects of the topic - explained the links and comparisons - supported their arguments with precise and relevant examples - reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question.	- showed a limited understanding of one or both of the interpretations - did not go beyond a basic explanation of part of the interpretation - did not link any contextual knowledge directly to the interpretation and therefore did not evaluate the interpretation - adopted a chronological rather than thematic approach - did not make links or comparisons even if events from different parts of the period were discussed in the same paragraph - did not cover the whole period - did not focus on the precise wording of the question - made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

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Section A overview

There is one compulsory question in this section. This question requires candidates to explain the view of each interpretation in relation to the question and then evaluate the interpretation by the application of contextual knowledge. Responses should show an understanding of the wider debate connected to the issue.

Section A in Paper Y308 is focused on the nature and extent of Philip II's support for the Inquisition

Question 1

1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages.

Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the nature and extent of Philip II's support for the Spanish Inquisition. [30]

There were a wide range of responses to this question, with the most successful answers being well focused on the views in the interpretations and able to identify the differences presented in the two interpretations. Less successful responses were often unclear in their understanding of the views being presented and frequently did not go beyond explaining the interpretations and being unable to apply contextual knowledge to support the explanation, confining the response to Level 3. Candidates needed to read the interpretations carefully and extract the views being presented. Interpretation A focused on Philip's determination to assert his control over the Inquisition, while Interpretation B's main argument was that Philip was submissive to its demands and willing to give it freedom, unlike other institutions in his kingdom.

It is important that candidates identify the overall argument of each interpretation in relation to the actual question. In evaluating Interpretation A responses could consider Philip's attendance at auto de fes, his use of the Inquisition to control the nation's morals and its use to control those studying abroad. In considering Interpretation B responses often cited the Caranza case and the role of the Inquisition in leading to the Aragon revolt. The implication of Interpretation B is that the Inquisition faced few limits and some more successful responses argued that the portrayal of the 'Black legend' was the result of this, however, others challenged the view that Philip deferred to it and cited how Philip possessed many books that were on the 'Index' of prohibited books.

Exemplar 1

1		Passage A is ultimately more convincing than passage B in explaining Philip's support of the Inquisition. Whilst passage B is less compelling as it overemphasises Philip's support of the Inquisition due to piety, A's balanced assessment of both the use of Philip's use of the Inquisition for political means, and also to uphold piety among the laity means it is more convincing than passage B. Whilst B is ultimately less convincing than A regarding Philip's support for the Inquisition, it has certain elements of accuracy when addressing how the Inquisition enforced piety. B's argument that Philip supported the Inquisition (Inq) for pious reasons due to 'Conanza' is indeed partially accurate: Conanza held a high position as Arch - Bishop of Toledo, and the longevity of his arrest from 1559-66, and Philip's simultaneous dispute with Pius IV (1559-65) on the matter does seem to show that B's argument due to Conanza's hetical writings does seem to show an element of convincingness in B's argument that Philip supported the Inq to uphold piety. Furthermore, B's argument that Philip's pious support for the Inquisition is shown due to 'his determination to obey and respect' the Inq is partially compelling. It is even by the end of his reign in 1592 he still attended the burning of 32 Protestants in Valladolid,
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showing another element of persuasiveness to B's argument that Philip supported the Inq. due to his own piety, and his desire to strictly enforce piety. However, on the whole, B overemphasises the influence of religious piety in regards to Philip's support for the Inq., and this makes B less convincing than A. B mentions 'Aragon' as a place where the Inq. had power in order to show Philip's pious support for the Inq., but this is overemphasised in an unconvincing way, as the Inq. only stretched into Aragon in 1590, and throughout the reign the Inquisition was particularly weak in Aragon, and in Galicia, showing a less persuasive element of B's argument. Furthermore, B's were for-reading argument that Philip 'upheld the dignity of the office' and felt an 'obligation' to support the Inq. to enforce piety, and due to his own piety, is greatly overemphasised, and ignores substantial historical evidence: Only 45 Inquisitors had to look over 15 tribunals and 8 million Spaniards and were greatly overworked, whilst Philip himself had 200 banned books on magic in his personal library, contradicting B's argument that Philip supported the Inq. with piety, as if this ~~argument~~ were true, Philip would have reformed the Inq., showing the unconvincing nature of B's argument. Furthermore, the 'determination' of Philip to support the Inquisition enforcing piety is greatly overemphasised, as even is because

as late as 1588 Augustinians were found not performing mass, and peasants in rural Spain mostly never saw an Inquisitor, and were able to continue doing superstitious rituals such as sacrificing to the Virgin Mary as late as the 1590's. This shows that whilst B has elements of convincingness when arguing that Philip supported the Inq. due to his piety and his desire to enforce piety, B's overemphasis of this argument is not supported by historical fact, and therefore B is less convincing than A regarding Philip's support for the Inq.

In contrast, A is more convincing than B, as it gives a balanced explanation that Philip supported the Inq. for political purposes, and in order to enforce piety among the laity. A immediately recognizes that 'Philip used the Inq. to direct it for his own purposes' and that it 'became a department of state', and this assessment is compelling: in 1590 he used the Inquisition to hunt down his political rival Perez, whilst he made sure this institution was free from Papal influence by recalling 'all Spanish students' studying abroad in November 1559 as A mentions, and in 1572 banning appeals to Rome in order to extend the Inq.'s judicial powers, showing the persuasive nature of A's argument that Philip supported the Inquisition for political purposes, in contrast to B's more

		optimistic view that it was <u>only</u> used to enforce piety. However, A also balances his its compelling argument that the Inq. was used as a political tool with an equally compelling argument that it nonetheless enforced piety, but to a more limited extent than Bosques. The 'Index of August 1559' A mentions is corroborative evidence for A's argument: balanced argument - the 1559 Index had 670 titles, but was purposefully separate from Rome's Index of the same year in order to uphold the political tool of the Inq. without Papal influence, and enforce piety, whilst the 'police-man of the nation's words' A describes the Inquisition as being im but due Showing the convincingness of A's balanced assessment of Philip's political and religious support of the Inquisition. Furthermore, the argument that like B's assertion, Philip forced the Inquisition to be 'police-man of the nation's words' is accurate: recital of the Lords prayer from 1552 - 1598 rose from 40% - 80% in Toledo * whilst 50% of the Inq's cases from 1579-90 focused on petty heresy of old Christians, yet unlike B, A also admits that this came at the cost of the Inq. as 'a persecutor of Jews', who, despite their 50% increase in numbers after the 1580 annexation of port Portugal, were only 3200 of the 40,000 Inquisition cases under Philip, whilst the Moriscos got far more attention as 88% of the cases in Granada, showing the compelling nature of A's balanced assessment that despite Philip's
* 77	Protestants were burnt from 1557-1562	

Question	Part	
		partial support for the lmg. to support the enforcement of piety, this only went so far, in contrast to B's argument that Philip's pious support for the lmg. was thoroughly effective. Indeed, this shows that A's argument that Philip's support for the lmg. was balanced between his political and pious support is greatly convincing and historically accurate, showing A to be more convincing than B. Indeed, A is ultimately more convincing than B regarding Philip's support of the lmg., as whilst B has elements of accuracy when arguing that the nature and extent of Philip's support was large due to his piety, B ultimately greatly overemphasises this and is less compelling, whereas A's more balanced argument that the nature and extent of Philip's support was great but both political, and religious is now backed by more historical fact, and is therefore more compelling.

Exemplar 1 is an example of work placed at the very top of Level 6, awarded 30 marks because the evaluation is developed and the knowledge used to test the views in the two interpretations is impressive. Although it could be argued that other points could have been made, examiners consider what can reasonably be expected in the time allowed for an A Level candidate.

Assessment for learning



Evaluate means give a value to the interpretation. In simple terms, is the view valid?

Assessment for learning

Responses need to identify the overall view of each interpretation about the issue in the question – in this instance the nature and extent of Philip's support for the Inquisition.

Assessment for learning

Candidates might be helped by having a list of evaluative words and phrases displayed in the classroom

Section B overview

Candidates are required to answer two questions from a choice of three. To do well on Section B candidates need to make connections and links across the whole period of their study. They should explain similarities and differences between the events they are discussing to show an awareness of continuity and change across the whole period, unless instructed otherwise. The comparisons may be made across the period within the topic or between regions, depending on the topic. It is also important that the comparisons are explained - what is similar or different between the periods or regions.

The strongest answers will test a hypothesis and reach a supported judgement.

Question 2*

2* 'The Catholic Reformation was a reaction to humanism and Protestantism.'

How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1492 to 1610?

[25]

This was the most popular question, but many struggled to go beyond explanation, often arguing that it was a reaction to humanism and Protestantism, but struggling to reach the higher levels due to a lack of synthesis. Where candidates argued that it was not simply a response they often drew on developments in Spain during the early years of the period, or some of the new orders that were established before the challenge of Luther and other reformers. Most argued that the changes and reforms of Trent were clear evidence that it was a response to humanism, but more importantly, to Protestantism. However, the most successful answers continued and looked at the later period and argued that attitudes had changed and that later Popes were not simply responding to these challenges but had adopted a new outlook reflected in publications such as the new Missal and Breviary and compared these developments with the attitude of earlier Popes, such as Alexander VI – although some candidates were aware that even Alexander had proposed reform, even though nothing came of it. It was the ability to compare across the period that allowed access to the higher levels. This was usually best achieved through a thematic approach and many considered issues such as doctrine, discipline and heresy as their themes.

Exemplar 2

		I strongly disagree that the Catholic Reformation during 1492-1610 was a reaction to humanism and Protestantism. Although it is undeniable humanism and Lutheranism had a role in inspiring reform, most reform, including doctrinal reform of doctrine, discipline and reaching the people came from within the Church itself and was ongoing and foreseeable since before 1517.
		In terms of doctrinal reform I strongly disagree that it was mainly reactionary to humanism and

Protestantism as Councils and Individuals prove it came from Church members themselves. ~~Pope Pius V~~ The Council of Trent's clarification of doctrine and approval of the Vulgate ~~as~~ as the official translation of the Bible in ~~1543~~ 1547 was foreshadowed by the ~~1512~~ ~~council~~ Vth Lateran Council 1513 called by Pope Julius III and although the rejection of double justification at Trent from 1551 was ~~a~~ influenced by Luther's '95 Theses' (1517), the 1541 Colloquy of Regensburg emphasizes ~~how~~ and the lack of agreement between Pope Paul III's representative (Contarini) and Luther's (Meinichen) served as a realisation to the Church that reconciliation between Protestants was not a possibility and therefore instead they focused on ~~clarifying Trent~~ clarifying their own doctrine instead of simply rejecting Lutheran doctrine, ~~such as the way~~ as exemplified by the rejection of the 10 sacraments Lutherans used in relation to the eucharist. Similarly, although Erasmus did put pressure on Church reform with works like the Greek Testament (1516) and Enchiridion (1510), the actual doctrinal reform after Trent ~~was~~ like the 1570 Holy Roman Mass, the catechism 1566 and Breviary by Pius V was foreshadowed by Cisneros' Breviary (1502) and Missal (1500) reflecting ~~how doctrinal reform existed~~ the hunger for doctrinal reform existed pre-Luther. The determination of other Popes as well to maintain the reform and improvement of doctrine ~~reflects~~ is reflected by ~~Sixtus V's revision~~ how Sixtus V revised

the Vulgate in 1587 and later ~~was~~ was mirrored by Clement VIII who revised it once in 1592 and then again 1598 ~~showing the importance~~ highlighting how Church reform ~~was~~ doctrinal reform came from the Church itself* and it's spiritual renewal, not from as a reaction to humanism and Protestantism.

In terms of disciplinary reform, although at the start of the period there were flaws, it's reform was already under way pre 1517 and pre - Erasmus and it came from the Church itself. ~~The reform of monastic orders such as~~ Although, at the start of the period discipline was far from exemplary, with Popes like Alexander VI (a notorious nepotist and a supporter of the burning of ~~Sava~~ reformer Savonarola in 1499) & Julius III (known as the 'Warrior Pope') and ~~then~~ Leo X ('Indulgences Pope') inspiring waves of humanists like Erasmus (Praise of Folly 1509, Julius Exclusus 1511) and Luther who criticised Leo X's use of indulgences, they did not affect disciplinary reform strongly and certainly did not stop it, with the reform of monastic orders such as the Discalced Carmelites (1562) ~~and Bonifacio's reform of the~~ being foreshadowed by individuals like Cisneros, who reformed the Franciscan Order in Spain in 1497 and Bricconel who reformed pre Luther and Erasmus' and Bricconel who reformed the diocese of Meaux in France (1518) ~~where~~ before Luther gained much influence, reflecting how the need for ~~reform~~ disciplinary reform was

already being tackled. ~~the~~ Religious orders such as 'The Oratory of Divine Love' (1497) were reformed pre 1517 as well and even inspired ~~further~~ the 1575 Roman Oratory by Philip Neri, which ~~which~~ dedicated themselves to disciplined study groups. Furthermore, the 1563 session of Trent banned the Office of Indulgences and declared celibacy of the priesthood mandatory, reflecting how the abuses of previous Popes ~~was~~ were not going to be ~~last~~ long-lasting as the Church itself was aware of the issues this posed ~~and this determination to improve discipline~~. The Trent 1547 decree that bishops must only have one bishopric per bishop ~~and~~ was foreshadowed by the 4th Lateran who discussed bishop guidelines in 1213 and the Council of Pisa ~~discussing~~ (1511) discussing the role and size of Curia was mirrored by Pius IV dismissing 400 excess officials from the Curia in 1561. In contrast to the start of the period, the improvement of the papacy with Popes like Sixtus V demanding bishops reside in their dioceses alongside Gregory XIII along with Pius V adding 20 new reformed cardinals to the Curia reflect that the Church's disciplinary reform came from within, therefore not reactionary to Luther or humanism.

In terms of reaching the people, the improvement of this also came from within Church members, with Lutheranism and humanism having barely any influence. Religious ~~orders~~ orders such as the Jesuits (1540) and the Ursulines were critical ~~to~~ in the improvement of reaching

the people. Although it can be argued the work of Jesuit Peter Canisius in 1546¹⁵⁴⁶ in the Holy Roman Empire was reactionary as he saved it from Lutheranism, the work of other Jesuits such as Matteo Ricci who converted over 1000 Chinese in the New World in 1583 reflects that he was simply doing missionary work. The fact the Jesuits focused strongly on areas like the New World (with 140 monasteries in Mexico by 1580) where Lutheranism was non-existent reflects that this came from within themselves, with Jesuits like Francis Xavier converting over 2000 Chinese in 1572 and the Jesuits having over 2 million converts in the Philippines at the end of the 16th century. The work of the Ursulines (1535) as well as converting the French nobility and establishing 24 communities in France by 1610 show the enthusiasm from this order regardless of humanist influences. This work is also similar to the Jesuits who had 50 colleges in Germany by 1555 and 150 colleges in France in 1590. Therefore, the reform of reaching the people was not reactionary to humanism or Lutheranism.

In conclusion, it is clear Lutheranism and Humanists had influences in the reformation, yet it is undeniable most reform came from the church itself, specially doctrinal, disciplinary and reaching the people.

Exemplar 2 provides a very successful response which is consistently focused and shows a high level of synthesis throughout and is well-supported, hence it was given full marks, Level 6, 25.

Misconception



Synthesis does not mean stating something is similar, there needs to be direct comparison and explanation as to whether something is similar or different, or whether there is change or continuity.

Question 3*

3* 'The most significant institutional reforms during the Catholic Reformation were those established at the Lateran Council (1512–17).'

How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1492 to 1610?

[25]

This was the least popular question and saw a number of very generalised responses in terms of the named factor, the Lateran Council. Whilst many who attempted this question had a general knowledge of some of the issues discussed at the Council, very few had the detailed knowledge to compare it with other Councils, such as Trent, or the Papacy and New Orders. The most successful answers adopted a thematic approach, while less successful responses often focused heavily on Trent and did not compare its significance with the Lateran Council.

Candidates should have been able to consider the Lateran decrees on bishops and abbacies, the strengthening of the powers of bishops, the Concordat with France and the ending of conciliarism. These issues and their success or otherwise could then have been compared with the reforms of Trent, the institutional reforms of the New Orders and the Jesuits, allowing the higher levels to be accessed.

Assessment for learning



Make sure that candidates have a good knowledge of all elements of the specification and do not just focus on what are perceived to be the main events.

Question 4*

4* 'The attitudes of the laity were the greatest obstacle to the reform of the Catholic Church.'

How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1492 to 1610?

[25]

There was much material here that candidates could consider, particularly in terms of the laity and their attitudes towards reform, allowing a range of comparisons to be made that would allow access to the higher levels. Responses often looked at three or four themes, those of the Papacy, clergy, secular rulers, and the laity being the most frequently discussed.

In discussing the Papacy responses often argued that their attitudes determined the success or otherwise of reform and were able to contrast the attitudes of the Renaissance Popes with later ones. In discussing secular rulers, attitudes in different countries were compared, for example Philip II who supported reform, provided it did not limit his power, and was contrasted with Henry VIII, Edward VI and Elizabeth I and they were also contrasted with Mary Tudor to show that there were obstacles in some countries but not others, but even within countries attitudes could vary over time. In discussing the clergy, responses often argued that a lack of education was an issue and noted the difficulties in Spain at the start of the period but commented on the improvements that took place in the second half of the period, similarly absentee bishops in the first half were contrasted with residency in the second half. Popular religion was seen as an obstacle in states such as Spain, but again this was contrasted with improvements by the end of the period. There were considerable opportunities for synthesis, but many did not make the comparisons and explain the similarities and differences.

Misconception



Confusion over who made up the laity was evident in a number of responses, with some mixing up secular and clerical.

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