

GCE

History A

**Y309/01: Thematic study and historical interpretations: The
ascendency of the Ottoman Empire 1453-1606**

A Level

Mark Scheme for June 2025

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This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which marks were awarded by examiners. It does not indicate the details of the discussions which took place at an examiners' meeting before marking commenced.

All examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the report on the examination.

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MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

PREPARATION FOR MARKING

RM ASSESSOR

1. Make sure that you have accessed and completed the relevant training packages for on-screen marking: *RM Assessor Online Training: OCR Essential Guide to Marking*.
2. Make sure that you have read and understood the mark scheme and the question paper for this unit. These are available in RM Assessor
3. Log-in to RM Assessor and mark the **required number** of practice responses (“scripts”) and the **required number** of standardisation responses.

MARKING

1. Mark strictly to the mark scheme.
2. Marks awarded must relate directly to the marking criteria.
3. The schedule of dates is very important. It is essential that you meet the RM Assessor 50% and 100% (traditional 40% Batch 1 and 100% Batch 2) deadlines. If you experience problems, you must contact your Team Leader (Supervisor) without delay.
4. If you are in any doubt about applying the mark scheme, consult your Team Leader by telephone or the RM Assessor messaging system, or by email.
5. **Crossed Out Responses**
Where a candidate has crossed out a response and provided a clear alternative then the crossed out response is not marked. Where no alternative response has been provided, examiners may give candidates the benefit of the doubt and mark the crossed out response where legible.

Rubric Error Responses – Optional Questions

Where candidates have a choice of question across a whole paper or a whole section and have provided more answers than required, then all responses are marked and the highest mark allowable within the rubric is given. Enter a mark for each question answered into RM assessor, which will select the highest mark from those awarded. *(The underlying assumption is that the candidate has penalised themselves by attempting more questions than necessary in the time allowed.)*

Multiple Choice Question Responses

When a multiple choice question has only a single, correct response and a candidate provides two responses (even if one of these responses is correct), then no mark should be awarded (as it is not possible to determine which was the first response selected by the candidate).

When a question requires candidates to select more than one option/multiple options, then local marking arrangements need to ensure consistency of approach.

Contradictory Responses

When a candidate provides contradictory responses, then no mark should be awarded, even if one of the answers is correct.

Short Answer Questions (requiring only a list by way of a response, usually worth only **one mark per response**)

Where candidates are required to provide a set number of short answer responses then only the set number of responses should be marked. The response space should be marked from left to right on each line and then line by line until the required number of responses have been considered. The remaining responses should not then be marked. Examiners will have to apply judgement as to whether a 'second response' on a line is a development of the 'first response', rather than a separate, discrete response. *(The underlying assumption is that the candidate is attempting to hedge their bets and therefore getting undue benefit rather than engaging with the question and giving the most relevant/correct responses.)*

Short Answer Questions (requiring a more developed response, worth **two or more marks**)

If the candidates are required to provide a description of, say, three items or factors and four items or factors are provided, then mark on a similar basis – that is downwards (as it is unlikely in this situation that a candidate will provide more than one response in each section of the response space.)

Longer Answer Questions (requiring a developed response)

Where candidates have provided two (or more) responses to a medium or high tariff question which only required a single (developed) response and not crossed out the first response, then only the first response should be marked. Examiners will need to apply professional judgement as to whether the second (or a subsequent) response is a 'new start' or simply a poorly expressed continuation of the first response.

6. Always check the pages (and additional objects if present) at the end of the response in case any answers have been continued there. If the candidate has continued an answer there, then add a tick to confirm that the work has been seen.
7. There is a NR (**No Response**) option. Award NR (No Response):
 - if there is nothing written at all in the answer space
 - OR if there is a comment which does not in any way relate to the question (e.g., 'can't do', 'don't know')
 - OR if there is a mark (e.g., a dash, a question mark) which is not an attempt at the question.Note: Award 0 marks – for an attempt that earns no credit (including copying out the question).

8. The RM Assessor **comments box** is used by your team leader to explain the marking of the practice responses. Please refer to these comments when checking your practice responses. **Do not use the comments box for any other reason.**
If you have any questions or comments for your team leader, use the phone, the RM Assessor messaging system, or e-mail.
9. Assistant Examiners will send a brief report on the performance of candidates to their Team Leader (Supervisor) via email by the end of the marking period. The report should contain notes on particular strengths displayed as well as common errors or weaknesses. Constructive criticism of the question paper/mark scheme is also appreciated.
10. For answers marked by levels of response:
- To determine the level** – start at the highest level and work down until you reach the level that matches the answer
 - To determine the mark within the level**, consider the following

Descriptor	Award mark
On the borderline of this level and the one below	At bottom of level
Just enough achievement on balance for this level	Above bottom and either below middle or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Meets the criteria but with some slight inconsistency	Above middle and either below top of level or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Consistently meets the criteria for this level	At top of level

11. Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	Blank Page
	Highlight
Off-page comment	
	Assertion
	Analysis
	Evaluation
	Explanation
	Factor
	Illustrates/Describes
	Irrelevant, a significant amount of material that does not answer the question
	Judgement
	Knowledge and understanding
	Provenance
	Simple comment
	Unclear
	View

Annotation	Meaning
S	Synthesis
C	Continuity/Change

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
1			Evaluate the interpretations in both of the two passages. Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the consequences of the Battle of Lepanto for the Ottomans. In locating the Interpretations within the wider historical debate, answers might suggest that Interpretation A argues that although it was a significant defeat for the Ottomans given unrest and the ending of their westward advance it was not a complete disaster. • In evaluating Interpretation A, answers might argue it is correct as Don John failed in his aim to rescue Cyprus. • Answers might argue A is correct as both sides lost large numbers of men as sailors were vulnerable in battles between galleys. • Answers might argue the defeat led to no lasting damage to the Ottomans, so it was somewhat symbolic in nature. • Answers might argue that by 1573 Venice had withdrawn from the Holy League, made peace with the sultan and given up Cyprus. • Answers might consider it was the first major naval defeat for the Turks so damaged their prestige. • Answers might consider there were uprisings in Greece and Albania • Answers might consider the defeat prevented the Ottomans from taking Crete and other Venetian outposts.	30	The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set. <u>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</u> The indicative content is intended to reflect the knowledge and understanding a candidate is likely to analyse and evaluate in order to arrive at a judgement in line with the question set. • No set answer is expected. • At Level 5 and above answers will evaluate both interpretations, locating them within the wider historical debate about the issue and using their own knowledge, and will reach a balanced judgement as to which they consider the most convincing about the issue in the question. • To be valid judgements they must be supported by relevant and accurate material. • Knowledge must not be credited in isolation. It should only be credited where it is used to analyse and evaluate the sources, in line with the descriptions in the levels mark scheme.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			In locating the Interpretations within the wider historical debate, answers might suggest that Interpretation B argues it was a major defeat for the Ottomans, but the fleet was soon rebuilt. • In evaluating Interpretation B, answers might argue B is correct as only 30 galleys escaped whilst the Christian fleet lost only 10 ships. • Answers might argue B is correct as the Holy League could not follow up its victory because of the loss of men and bad weather. • Answers might argue that with the help of Algerian ship builders the Ottomans soon built a new fleet of 200 ships, equipped with modern weapons. • Answers might argue the Ottomans controlled the Eastern Mediterranean after 1572 after the meeting of fleets off the port of Modon. • Answers might consider the psychological impact of the defeat on the Ottomans. • Answers might consider Lepanto cost the Ottomans upwards of 80,000 fighting men. • Answers might consider the financial impact of the battle on the Ottomans and how naval warfare was limited after the battle.		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
2*			‘Ottoman expansion in the Balkans was more successful than in the Mediterranean.’ How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1453 to 1606? Answers might consider some of the following themes: territorial, economic, social, religious, political. In supporting the hypothesis in the question, • It might be argued the Ottomans were able to destroy Hungarian forces at Mohacs. • Answers might consider the capture of Belgrade in 1521. • Answers might consider the capture of Budapest and the weakened state of Hungary which posed no threat to the Ottomans. • Answers might consider that even after defeat at Lepanto the Ottomans dominated the eastern Mediterranean. • Answers might consider the failure to take Malta. • Answers might consider the capture of slaves in the Balkans and the use of the <i>devshirme</i> and <i>janissary</i> systems. • Answers might consider the benefits of the <i>timar</i> system in the Balkans. In challenging the hypothesis in the question, • It might be argued that the Ottomans were unable to take Vienna in 1529.	25	The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set. Both features that support the hypothesis and features that challenge the hypothesis are detailed. <u>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</u> The indicative content is intended to reflect the knowledge and understanding a candidate is likely to analyse and evaluate in order to arrive at a judgement in line with the question set. • No set answer is expected. • At higher levels answers might establish criteria against which to judge • To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material. • Knowledge must not be credited in isolation. It should only be credited where it is used as the basis for analysis and evaluation, in line with descriptions in the levels mark scheme.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			• Answers might consider Habsburg resistance in the Balkans and the problem for the Ottomans of expanded supply routes. • Answers might consider the capture of Cyprus in 1571. • Answers might consider the success of Barbarossa and the Barbary pirates. • Answers might consider the dominance of the Ottomans in North Africa, including the capture of Tunis and defeat of the Christian fleet off Djerba in 1560. • Answers might consider the gains of trade routes and trade with Venice and the disruption to Western trade.		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
3*			To what extent did the principles of Ottoman conquest remain the same throughout the period from 1453 to 1606? Answers might consider some of the following themes: occupation, tribute, local vassals, annexation, timar, society. In supporting the hypothesis in the question, • It might be argued that the Ottomans believed they had a divine claim to universal empire. • Answers might consider they had a mission to bring Islam to the rest of the world and remove other religions. • Answers might consider revenge for the Crusades as a principle. • Answers might consider the desire to dominate Mediterranean trade and gain wealth, hence defeating the Venetians. • Answers might consider the idea of self-funding and permanent conquest which allowed the raising of large armies. • Answers might consider the desire to open new trade routes. • Answers might consider the occupation of the Balkans in order to acquire slaves for the army: the <i>devshirme</i>. In challenging the hypothesis in the question, • It might be argued principles varied according to the region.	25	The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set. <u>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</u> The indicative content is intended to reflect the knowledge and understanding a candidate is likely to analyse and evaluate in order to arrive at a judgement in line with the question set. • No set answer is expected. • At higher levels answers might establish criteria against which to judge • To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material. • Knowledge must not be credited in isolation. It should only be credited where it is used as the basis for analysis and evaluation, in line with descriptions in the levels mark scheme.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			• Answers might consider the different emphasis of the different Sultans, comparing Suleiman with Bayezid or later rulers. • Answers might consider the direction of expansion varied under different Sultans. • Answers might consider that towards the end of the period the system of producing soldiers and paying them had lost its efficiency. • Answers might consider the problems associated with continual expansion: supply and reward. • Answers might consider the decline in the system of conquest and expansion. • Answers might consider the decline in the <i>timars</i> and <i>devshirme</i> system in producing recruits. • Answers might consider the conservative nature of the Ottoman system which meant they were slow to respond to changes in the west. • Answers might consider the changing nature of <i>timars</i>.		
4*			How serious was the Ottoman threat to the Austrian Habsburgs throughout the period from 1453 to 1606? Answers might consider some of the following themes: dynastic, political, economic, social, military. In arguing that the threat was serious,	25	The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set. <u>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</u> The indicative content is intended to reflect the knowledge and understanding a candidate is likely to analyse and evaluate in order to arrive at a judgement in line with the question set. • No set answer is expected.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			• It might be argued that the defeat of the Hungarians allowed the Ottomans to advance on Vienna. • Answers might consider Hungary was divided, which weakened its ability to resist, while the loss of many nobles made it militarily weaker. • Answers might consider the psychological threat posed by the Ottomans after Mohacs and that they would lay siege to Vienna in the seventeenth century. • Answers might consider the problem of support from the German princes for the Habsburgs. • Answers might consider that Ferdinand became an Ottoman vassal and paid tribute. • Answers might consider the number of problems facing the Habsburgs which weakened their ability to resist – Reformation, French Wars, Franco-Ottoman agreements, power of the emperor. In arguing that the threat was not serious, • It might be argued that Ottoman supply routes were stretched. • Answers might consider the failure to take Vienna in 1529. • Answers might consider Ottoman interest elsewhere in Europe and Asia. • Answers might consider the forces available to the Habsburgs, who were much stronger than the Hungarians.		• At higher levels answers might establish criteria against which to judge • To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material. • Knowledge must not be credited in isolation. It should only be credited where it is used as the basis for analysis and evaluation, in line with descriptions in the levels mark scheme.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			• Answers might consider the strength of Charles V and his determination to defend Habsburg heartlands. • Answers might consider the division of Hungary provided a buffer. • Answers might consider the Ottoman withdrawal after the death of Suleiman. • Answers might consider the military changes in Habsburg forces by the 1590s which strengthened their position (handgun, cannon and mercenaries) whilst the <i>sipahis</i> were outmoded.		

APPENDIX 1 – this contains a generic mark scheme grid

	<i>AO3: Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted.</i>
	Generic mark scheme for Section A, Question 1: Interpretation [30]
Level 6 26–30 marks	The answer has a very good focus on the question throughout. It has thorough and sustained evaluation of the interpretations, using detailed and accurate knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue, in order to produce a convincing and supported analysis of them in relation to the question.
Level 5 21–25 marks	The answer has a good focus on the question throughout. It has good evaluation of the interpretations, using relevant knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue, in order to produce a supported analysis of them in relation to the question.
Level 4 16–20 marks	The answer is mostly focused on the question. It has evaluation of the interpretations based on generally relevant knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue, in order to produce an analysis of them in relation to the question.
Level 3 11–15 marks	The answer is partially focused on the question. It has partial evaluation of the interpretations based on some knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue. There may be some use of information from one of the two interpretations to support the evaluation of the other, but the evaluation will not rely on this. There is a limited analysis of the interpretations in relation to the question.
Level 2 6–10 marks	The answer has a limited focus on the question. Parts of the answer are just description of the interpretations, with evaluation in relation to historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue being weak, and evaluation relying heavily on information drawn from the other interpretation. There is a very limited analysis of the interpretations in relation to the question.
Level 1 1–5 marks	The answer has some relevance to the topic, but not the specific question. The answer consists mostly of description of the interpretations with very limited evaluation based on very generalised knowledge of historical context and minimal or no reference to the wider historical debate. Analysis of the interpretations in relation to the question is either in the form of assertion or lacking.
0 marks	No evidence of understanding and no demonstration of any relevant knowledge.

	<i>AO1: Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.</i>
	Generic mark scheme for Section B, Questions 2, 3 and 4: Essay [25]
Level 6 21–25 marks	The answer has a very good focus on the question. Detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to reach a fully developed synthesis supporting a convincing and substantiated judgement. There is a well-developed and sustained line of reasoning which is coherent and logically structured. The information presented is entirely relevant and substantiated.
Level 5 17–20 marks	The answer has a good focus on the question. Generally accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to reach a developed synthesis supporting a substantiated judgement. There is a well-developed line of reasoning which is clear and logically structured. The information presented is relevant and in the most part substantiated.
Level 4 13–16 marks	The answer is mostly focused on the question. Relevant knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to reach a synthesis supporting a reasonable judgement. There is a line of reasoning presented with some structure. The information presented is in the most-part relevant and supported by some evidence.
Level 3 9–12 marks	The answer has a partial focus on the question. Some relevant knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and explain key features of the period studied in order to attempt an undeveloped synthesis, which is linked to a judgement, though the supporting explanation may lack detail and clarity. The information has some relevance and is presented with limited structure. The information is supported by limited evidence.
Level 2 5–8 marks	The answer has only a limited focus on the question. Limited relevant knowledge and understanding is used to give a limited explanation and analysis of key features of the period studied. There is a judgement but this may not be clearly linked with the supporting explanation. The information has some relevance, but is communicated in an unstructured way. The information is supported by limited evidence and the relationship to the evidence may not be clear.
Level 1 1–4 marks	The answer has a limited focus on the topic, but not the specific question. The answer is largely descriptive, with only very generalised knowledge of the period studied being used to attempt basic explanation and very limited analysis. Judgements are unsupported and are not linked to analysis. Information presented is basic and may be ambiguous or unstructured. The information is supported by limited evidence.
0 marks	The answer contains no relevant information.

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