

GCE

History A

**Y301/01: Thematic study and historical interpretations: The
early Anglo-Saxons c.400-800**

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:
- a. **To determine the level** – start at the highest level and work down until you reach the level that matches the answer
 - b. **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
	Simple comment
	Unclear
	View
	Synthesis
	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 process of Christianisation during the period from c.400 to 800. In locating the Interpretations within the wider historical debate, answers might suggest that Interpretation A provides a ‘top-down’ and entirely political explanation for Christianisation. In evaluating Interpretation A, • Answers might argue that the quest for political unity was the most important factor. • Answers might argue that Christian culture was exotic in its use of wine and oil in ceremonies, and hence prestigious, introduction to early Anglo-Saxon kingship. • Answers might argue that part of the appeal of Christianisation lay in the political advantage of kings being able to assert their authority by divine right according to Biblical texts, noting it was a literate faith. • Answers might consider the value to Anglo-Saxon kings of applying the Biblical example of imperial rule in their own kingdoms, notably in its precedent for law-making • Answers might consider the value of clerical literacy as a means to asserting royal authority. • Answers might consider the political advantages of the restructuring, through	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 reach a balanced judgement as to which they consider the most convincing about the issue in the question. • 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 to analyse and evaluate the interpretations, in line with descriptions in the levels mark scheme

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			consecration calling of synods, of religious life around royal authority. • Answers might argue that Christianisation offered kings considerable advantages in institutionalising their rule and asserting their authority through bishops and monasteries. In locating the Interpretations within the wider historical debate, answers might suggest that Interpretation B puts forward ‘bottom-up’ as well as ‘top-down’ explanations for the process of Christianisation. In evaluating Interpretation B, • Answers might argue that the source implies that the importance of the way in which conversion spread organically between kin, friends and neighbours deserves more attention. • Answers might consider the importance of the contribution of missionaries such as Ninian and Columba. • Answers might argue that the conversion of those in authority was of paramount importance, citing examples such as that Aethelbert of Kent and Edwin of Northumbria. • Answers might argue that force was sometimes a factor in Christianisation while also noting the effective use of force by heathen kings, notably Penda, in undermining Christianisation. • Answers might argue the Papacy played an important part in the process, particularly in the		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			work of Pope Gregory in association with Augustine's mission. • Answers might consider, with examples, how the conversion of existing places of worship to the new religion was a key strategy in making the conversion process more acceptable to its recipients • Answers might consider, with examples, the preservation, in the process of Christianisation, of certain traditional pre-Christian practices and rites.		

Question		Answer	Mark	Guidance
2*		‘The reign of Aethelbald (716-757) was the most important turning point in the emergence of the Mercian supremacy in the period from c.400 to 800.’ How far do you agree? Answers might consider some of the following themes: overlordship, economic growth, urbanisation, construction of defences, administrative developments, conversion to Christianity, development of relations with the Church, Anglo-Frankish relations. In arguing it was the most important turning-point, • Answers might consider his securing of Mercian overlordship south of the Humber by 731. • Answers might consider his apparent recognition as king of all the South English & King of Britain, and his success in maintaining this overlordship of the south for longer than any king before him. • Answers might consider evidence of unprecedented Mercian wealth in his reign (e.g. coinage). • Answers might consider the significance for Mercia of his acquisition of London as a rapidly developing emporium. • Answers might consider evidence for his ability to coordinate resources for major undertakings (e.g. Wat’s Dyke which may date from his reign). • Answers might consider evidence for significant administrative developments (e.g. the Tribal Hidage document which may date from his reign). • Answers might consider Aethelbald’s relations with and contributions to the Church (e.g. the admiration of Boniface and other bishops).	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 the significance of a range of important turning-points. • 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 domination of the English Church by Mercian bishops in his reign (e.g. archbishops of Canterbury). In arguing there were other very important turning-points, • Answers might consider the significance of the development of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the 5th and 6th centuries in the emergence of Mercia, • Answers might consider the role of the expansion of monasticism in the late 7th century in developing the mighty foundations of Mercian hegemony. • Answers might consider the reigns of Penda, Wulfhere, and Ethelred who challenged Northumbrian hegemony and expanded Mercia. • Answers might consider the significance as a turning-point of Penda's conversion to Christianity • Answers might consider Offa's reconstruction of the Mercian hegemony (and its further expansion). • Answers might consider the significance (e.g. economic) of Offa's close Anglo-Frankish relations (specifically, his relations with Charlemagne). • Answers might consider Offa's development of the concept of Mercian kingship by consecration and inheritance. • Answers might consider the reign of Cenwulf in which Mercian power was at its zenith (e.g. through the acquisition of Essex and territory in Wales)		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
3*			'Theodore played a more important part than any other individual in the development of religion and the Christian Church in Britain and Ireland.' How far do you agree with this view of the period from c.400 to 800? Answers might consider some of the following themes: problems confronting the Church, Church administration, episcopacy and Canterbury, synods, literature, missionaries, monasteries, papal influence, the role of kings. In arguing Theodore played the most important part, • Answers might consider the state of the Church before his arrival in 669 (vacant sees; revival of heathenism; lack of unity). • Answers might consider his reorganisation of the administration of the Church. • Answers might consider his creation of a school at Canterbury (attended by Aldhelm) which attracted scholars from afar. • Answers might consider his introduction to the English church of Mediterranean learning and approaches. • Answers might consider his creation of new dioceses. • Answers might consider his creation of the first council (at Hertford in 673) of the whole English Church and subsequent annual synods. • Answers might consider the influence of his teachings on Christian duties and discipline as recorded in his <i>Penitential</i>.	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 the importance of Theodore in comparison with the contributions of other individuals. • 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 his assertion of the authority of Canterbury and the contribution this made to English identity and unity. In arguing other individuals played an important part, • Answers might consider the career of Patrick in evangelizing Ireland in the fifth century. • Answers might consider the work of Ninian in bringing Christianity to the Picts in Scotland in the early fifth century. • Answers might consider David's mission in Wales in the sixth century. • Answers might consider the influence of founders of great monasteries (e.g. Columba and Iona; Aiden and Lindisfarne). • Answers might consider the impact of Augustine's arrival in Kent in 597. • Answers might consider King Oswiu's role in the initiation and outcome of the Synod of Whitby in 664. • Answers might consider the impact on the prestige of the church by other influential priests (e.g. Bede, Boniface of Crediton).		
4*			To what extent did burial customs change in Britain and Ireland in the period from c.400 to 800? Answers might consider some of the following themes: pagan burials, Christian burials, cremations, inhumations, grave markers, grave goods, cemeteries, elite burials, orientation of burials, belief in the afterlife.	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
			In discussing changes in burial customs in the period, • Answers might consider the transition from ‘pagan’ to Christian styles of burial throughout Britain. • Answers might consider the decline in variety of burial practices as communities converted to Christian customs. • Answers might consider the demise of urn cremations. • Answers might consider the demise of ship burials (e.g. Snape, Sutton Hoo). • Answers might consider the demise of barrow burials. • Answers might consider the demise of more elaborate gravegoods (e.g. weapons and shields in ‘warrior’ graves, Taplow ‘prince’). • Answers might consider the emergence of cemeteries in the vicinity of (e.g. in eastern Scotland) and within churches replacing older tradition (e.g. in Ireland) of burial in relative isolation. In discussing continuity in burial customs in the period, • Answers might consider the dominance of supine inhumation across the period. • Answers might consider the continuing presence of ‘gravegoods’ (e.g. gold cross etc in		• At higher levels answers might establish criteria against which to judge the relative importance of burials. • 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
			St. Cuthbert's tomb) in some graves and their total absence in others throughout the period. • Answers might consider the continuing practice of memorials as markers of burial sites of eminent individuals (e.g. mounds in southern England, engraved stone crosses in Ireland and Scotland). • Answers might consider the continuation of respect for the dead in relation to the time and effort taken to make coffins (throughout the period), dig graves etc. • Answers might consider burials throughout the period as evidence of belief in an afterlife (e.g. elaborate gravegoods; significance of Christian east-west orientation). • Answers might consider the evidence for elite burials throughout the period (e.g. of supposed king, Raedwald, at Sutton Hoo, St. Wilfrid's crypt at Hexham). • Answers might consider the evidence for the continuing importance of elaborate ritual in association with burial (e.g. evidence of feasting at pre-Christian burial sites, evidence of worship at saints' shrines).		

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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