

Examiners' report

AS LEVEL

HISTORY A

**OCR Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE
in History A**

H105

For first teaching in 2015

Y137/01 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 Y137/01 series overview

Y137 is one of four units for the AS Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of history of about fifty years through an Enquiries or source-based option and an essay. The paper is divided into two sections.

In Section A, candidates have to answer two compulsory source questions based on three written primary sources. The first question requires them to use one source to assess its usefulness. The second question requires the use of all three 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 the evaluation of the reliability of the evidence given not on the topic or contextual knowledge.

To do well on Section B, candidates needed 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.

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 - linked the contextual knowledge 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, discussed at least two issues in depth - gave supporting detail that was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic - reached a supported judgement about the issue in 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 or more of the sources - reached a judgement based on their knowledge rather than the provenance of the sources - showed a lack of understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay, often writing about the topic rather than the specific issue in the question - were unable to support their answer with relevant material - did not focus on the precise wording of the question - made unsupported comments about issues which were assertions.

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Section A overview

The Enquiry section in this unit examines the unrest of 1549 and the downfall of Protector Somerset. This is the only part of the AS 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.

Question 1

Mid Tudor Crises 1547–1558

- 1 Use your knowledge of the rebellions of 1549 to assess how useful **Source B** is as evidence of the instability caused by the unrest in 1549. [10]

Although most responses did use the correct source (Source B) to answer the question, many did not focus on the issue of instability but wrote about the causes of unrest in 1549, often displaying good knowledge of Kett's rebellion, the Western or Prayer Book and the other more local rebellions. Stronger responses did focus on the issue of 'great slaughter and shedding of blood' to suggest that this was evidence of instability, evidenced at both Dussindale and Sampford Courtenay. Responses also commented on the issue of the need for 'speedy remedy' and the fear that if this was not evident then there was potential for the state to be 'brought into great peril'. The source also provided the opportunity to consider the instability that resulted from the nature of Somerset's government. In using contextual knowledge, issues such as the numbers involved in the unrest, the use of troops and the extent to which government was threatened were discussed. Most were able to comment on the provenance, even if they had focused on the causes of unrest and noted that these were the charges against Somerset and therefore were likely to emphasise the threat to the nation that his rule had caused. However, considering this, there were very few responses which reached a judgement about the utility of the source in relation to the actual question.

Misconception



The question did not ask about the causes of unrest but whether there was instability in 1549. It is important to focus on the specific issue raised in the question

Exemplar 1

1	Overall, source B is useful ^{pretty} useful as evidence of the instability caused by the unrest in 1549 as it accounts the events of Lord Protector Somerset and how they led to the disquiet.
	* Source B is useful evidence of the instability caused by unrest
	Source B states that 'the great disobedience remaining from the among the King's subjects consider that if speedy remedy is is might bring
	*
	Source B states that 'the great disobedience remaining as among the King's subjects consider that if speedy remedy is not provided, both his majesty's royal person and the whole state might be brought into peril.' which shows how the disquiet of the King's subjects, if not rectified, would cause severe problems for the stability in England. The source also states that 'the great rebellion of the people in various parts of the realm and the great slaughter and shedding of blood' which portrays the rebellion in 1549 as extremely violent with horrible consequences and awful fatalities. I know what the source is saying to be true because the Kett's rebellion which had a force of 16000 men in which not only shows how many of the King's subjects subjects subjects were willing to take part in the a rebellion. However, I also know that out of the 16000 rebels a part of the Kett's

rebellion in 1549 - 3000 of men were killed in a battle against the Duke of Norfolk, which ended the rebellion.

Source B was written by the Privy Council and it was ~~the~~ from the charges of the Privy Council against the Duke of Somerset. This should give the source some credibility, ~~and~~ as it is from the arrest and imprisonment of Somerset. However, the Privy Council was made up of people who joined the anti-Somerset faction in 1549 such as Warwick (Duke of Northumberland) which makes the content of the source seem to be biased. The Privy Council may have overexaggerated the harmful wrongdoings of Protector Somerset so that he would easily be removed from the council which means the content of the source may have ulterior motives to ~~say~~ what it ~~say~~ is saying. The Privy Council were sure would make the harmful events of the rebellion seem much worse than they are to solidify Somerset's imprisonment as his behaviour then becomes irredeemable. ~~The Privy Council~~ The source was written after the rebellions had been defeated which means they were no longer such a threat. Overall, Source B presents the arrest in 1549 as a massive damage to stability; however

		the content has to be may have been
		over-exaggerated by those in the anti-
		Somerset faction to make sure that
		Somerset would be imprisoned.

Exemplar 1 provides an example of a response where a judgement about the utility based on the provenance is shown.

Question 2

- 2 Using these three sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that the duke of Somerset was responsible for his own downfall. [20]

Most candidates did use all three sources to address the question, but there were a number where Source B was ignored, perhaps because candidates thought that the issues had been addressed in Question 1. In addressing Source A, most responses were able to argue that Paget believed it was Somerset's 'softness' that led to his downfall and commented on this coming from a trusted advisor, with the strongest commenting that he had promised, on Henry VIII's death, to listen to Paget's advice. In discussing Source B, most argued that the disorders were the result of Somerset's ill government but argued it might be less valid because of it being the charges against him. Responses often blamed Somerset for the numbers killed or commented on his leniency through the establishment of Hale's Enclosure Commission, which encouraged unrest. In discussing Source C, some argued that it was Somerset who was to blame and commented on his attempts to control the king through taking him to Windsor, but most argued that his fall was the result of Northumberland and his actions, fearing Somerset might control the king. As with Question 1, most were able to explain the sources and apply some contextual knowledge and discuss provenance, but few reached a full analysis based on a judgement about the provenance of the sources.

Misconception



It is important that candidates consider all three sources, even though one of the sources will have been discussed in Question 1.

Assessment for learning



In order to reach the highest level it is important that judgements made are based on the provenance of the sources as only then will sources have been fully analysed.

Exemplar 2

2	The three sources, together, overall, support the view that the duke of Somerset was responsible for his own downfall. Source A and B, both with argue that in favour of this, while Source C alone disagrees. Whilst Source Source B both holds moderate weight due to questionable provenance, ultimately Source C holds even less weight due to inaccurate content as well as unreliable provenance, when Source A has both ^{accurate} reliable content and reliable provenance.
	Source A supports the view that Somerset was responsible for his own downfall, as it argues correctly that it was in fact Somerset's "softness" and "intention to be good to the poor" that created rebellion. This is shown to be accurate in content as Somerset established the a committee on enclosure led by John Hales, who's actions in preventing enclosure practices galvanised the people of East Anglia to follow suit, attacking the gentry and tearing down enclosure in the Kett rebellion, believing they had permission from the government. Therefore, it is accurate to assess that it was Somerset's "softness" that led to the Kett rebellion spreading, damaging his reputation and leading to his fall. However, the provenance of Source A is unreliable, and means further the provenance

of Source A is reliable, leading to it holding the most weight. As the Source comes from William Paget, a trusted advisor to Somerset and relatively religiously moderate - thus being sceptical of Northumberland, Somerset's opposition - it shows that the writer had little reason to overplay the role of Somerset in his downfall. In conjunction with the Source's scathing, angered tone, it also suggests that Paget was speaking from the heart to a friend or close colleague, and did not write it intending to take down Somerset necessarily. Therefore, as the content is accurate and the provenance is reliable, Source A holds tremendous weight.

Source B also supports the view in the question, as it argues Somerset fell as he "has not only refused to give ear to their [his] advisors" and has had been "steering to follow his own fantasies". This is proven accurate by the fact that Somerset largely bypassed parliament, invoking 77 Proclamations during his time as protector, and establishing the "New Council" in Somerset House. Therefore, Somerset did largely refuse to "give ear" and failed to respond to the advice of parliament and the privy council, weakening his reputation and

proving Source B accurate. However, the provenance's unreliability reduces the weight of the Source, as it comes from the charge of the Privy Council, who were by 6th October 1549, when the Source was written, firmly in the hands of the anti-Somerset, or pro-Northumberland, faction. Thus, it is likely to overstate the role of Somerset in the ending of his reign, as the council would have wished to secure his downfall and removal from public office. Therefore, as the provenance of the Source is unreliable, it can only be assigned moderate weight in spite of its accurate content.

Source C, however, disagrees with the view in the question, instead arguing that Northumberland orchestrated Somerset's downfall as he "feared" Somerset as the only person who might take away his control of the king. The content of this is proven inaccurate however, as by 1552 it was clear that Edward's relationship with Somerset had soured, due to Somerset's attempted coup in which he kidnapped Edward and kept him in Warwick castle, where Edward complained "I think I am in prison". Therefore, Somerset had no longer been likely to "take away" his control of the

King", as Edward was already wary of Somerset due to those events. Thus, the content is inaccurate. Further, the provenance of Source C diminishes its reliability as it was a parliamentary record made in 1552, after the Somerset had already made somewhat of a ~~regr~~ recovery to a minor political position due to the help of some friends. Therefore, as many in parliament were sympathetic to Somerset by this point, they ~~were~~ the records would likely have been written to portray Somerset as a victim during his trial, and would underplay the role of Somerset in his own downfall. Ultimately, as this damages the provenance of Source C, ~~and the content of the source is and proves it is~~ ~~unreliable~~, and the content of the source is inaccurate, this source should only be given very limited weight.

Whilst Source C disagrees that Somerset was responsible for his own downfall, ultimately due to its inaccurate content and unreliable provenance it holds far less weight than Sources A and B, that each hold accurate content, and, in the case of Source A, ^{reliable} provenance. Therefore, as Sources A and B agree with the view in the question, overall the sources agree that Somerset was responsible for his own downfall.

As with Question 1, most were able to explain the sources and apply some contextual knowledge and discuss provenance, but few reached a full analysis based on a judgement about the provenance of the sources. However, Exemplar 2 provides an example of a Level 6 answer (17 marks) where this was evident in the concluding paragraph but is not fully developed and therefore does not go higher in the level.

Section B overview

Two essays are set, each from a different key topic. Here the candidates are asked to consider two key issues of the reign of Elizabeth I. The issue of marriage dominated much of her reign and candidates are asked to consider why she did not marry, and the second question requires an assessment of the seriousness of the problems she faced in her later years.

Question 3*

Elizabethan England

3* Assess the reasons why Elizabeth I did not marry.

[20]

Many responses set out the reasons why it was expected that Elizabeth should marry and then went on to explain why these were not fulfilled. Several responses discussed the lack of suitable suitors, stressing particularly the religious issues surrounding both Philip of Spain and Anjou, while others discussed the problems associated with domestic suitors, most notably Dudley and the rumours surrounding the death of his wife. This issue was also linked by many to the question of faction and the concerns surrounding that. Most responses discussed Elizabeth's early years and the impact of her mother's death and the possibility of an unhappy experience with Seymour, although the strongest responses used these issues to argue that it was impossible to assess their impact on the queen. However, the most frequent issue discussed surrounded her unwillingness to share or lose power to a husband and that she did not wish to be dominated.

Exemplar 3

3	Elizabeth did not marry for many reasons, such as a her wanting control, there were no suitable candidates as well as trauma and sexual abuse. Overall, Elizabeth I did not marry due to her need for control. One reason why Elizabeth did not marry would be due to her need for control. In the 16th and 17th century, women were viewed as objects, they belonged to their father and, once they were married off, they would then be the personal property of their husbands. Women had no control or autonomy once they married and were often at their husbands mercy. Despite the privy council petitioning twice for her Elizabeth to marry, she was refused (once in 1549 and 15 1559 and to 1563) especially after the smallpox scare in 1562 when she almost
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idea. The role many expected Elizabeth to take was marriage and children since England had no heir to replace Elizabeth if she died, especially after the frequent deaths of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary I. However, Elizabeth may have refused to marry since she wanted control. If Elizabeth married, that her control over England would go to her husband, she would lose her autonomy and be forced to obey his wishes. Elizabeth wanted control since it meant she could dictate her own choice which would benefit the state without argument or conflict with her husband — this ability to choose overruled any other reasons as to why she never married first. So, Elizabeth I never married in order to secure her position as queen and take control of her life without any power going to her husband.

Another reason why Elizabeth I never married was because there were no viable candidates to wed. Elizabeth's strict criteria for marriage was due to numerous reasons — England was extremely xenophobic, which meant they disliked foreigners and foreign control which would remove any international alliances with neighbouring countries. Marrying an Englishman would be problematic since his family would be elevated in court and have more control. Elizabeth was also the living embodiment of England's spirit with the motto in Rome due to her father, Henry VIII leaving the Church of England and reintroducing Protestantism as the

religious doctrine so he could divorce his wife and marry Anne Boleyn. Therefore if she were to convert to Catholicism, she would be removing her claim to the throne since Catholics don't believe in divorce, so she couldn't really marry a Catholic or convert. There were some candidates but none were viable. Robert Dudley was the Queen's favourite, and many believed they were in love, however the Dudley family had been involved in scandal (Northumb-
erland execution) which made him a unwashed candidate. There was also the controversy of his wife's unusual claim since she had taken down the stairs, many accused Dudley of murdering his wife to marry Elizabeth which forced her to say she would never marry ~~the~~ Dudley. Phillip II Spain had been married to her since Mary I yet he was Catholic and a king which meant there would be constant fighting over control. Therefore this shows that Elizabeth didn't marry since there were no viable candidates to choose from which would appease every region of England.

The final reason why Elizabeth may have never married could be due to psychological trauma and sexual abuse. Elizabeth grew up witnessing her father's constant unhappy marriages and the abuse of her ~~stepfather~~ ^{un-} stepmothers in her father. Two of them were executed and one died in childbirth. She also ended up

witnessing the deteriorating marriage of her sister Mary I with Philip II. This shows psychological trauma prevented Elizabeth from marrying since he was forced to witness the unhappy marriage and traumatic experiences women suffered under their husbands. Elizabeth was even noted to have claimed to be of her sister's of her fear of childbirth which would explain why she never married. Sexual abuse is also another factor since Elizabeth had lived with Catherine Parr and her husband during her brother's reign. Many have noted the relationship between Elizabeth and him to be inappropriate and way too close as she was only a child e.g. he would tickle her and enter her chambers unannounced. This inappropriate behaviour leaves many speculating she endured sexual abuse under Catherine Parr's husband which is why she was sent away after Parr feared the closeness was too uncomfortable. This shows why Elizabeth never married since it demonstrates how her irrational fear of men could have left her unwilling to get married since she feared intimacy after witnessing such traumatic events and enduring sexual abuse. This links to why Elizabeth never married.

Overall, despite psychological trauma, sexual abuse and a lack of candidates being an understandable reasoning for why she never married, in conclusion, Elizabeth's desire for control is the more valid explanation. This is because there is no extreme

		clear evidence to suggest Elizabeth suffered abuse or was impaired by the remarriage in a way which would put her off marriage. Elizabeth's fear of men is speculative as she often had male favourites and gave them nicknames, plus she was heard describing Henry VIII in a positive light which indicates another reason. Elizabeth avoided and almost married many suitors of a different religion, one of which was very popular in England despite being Catholic. This showed religion couldn't be strong enough to prevent some men from being genuine candidates. Therefore this shows that Elizabeth never married as she wanted control, using marriage as a bait in order to maintain influence and control the council, government and factions. She wanted control over Engl
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There were many reasons for candidates to discuss, and the strongest responses considered their relative importance as is seen in the response in Exemplar 3. This response was placed in Level 5 at 18 marks.

Assessment for learning



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

Question 4*

4* How serious were the problems of unrest and rebellion in the period from 1588 to 1603? **[20]**

The strongest responses identified a range of issues that could be used to assess the seriousness of rebellions and unrest. This often included the threat to government, support for the monarch and how easy it was for the government to deal with the problem. Many responses argued that Tyrone's rebellion was a serious issue given the length of time it lasted, the cost, the size of the force Elizabeth had to send, the failure of Essex to resolve the problem and the added threat of support from Spain. However, most other rebellions were seen as presenting little challenge, most notably Essex and the Oxfordshire rising, although some did argue that the Oxfordshire rising of 1596, despite consisting of a very small number, could be considered a serious threat given the harsh response. In discussing the Essex rising several responses were confused, believing Essex had widespread support and confusing it with other rebellions or having links to Mary Queen of Scots. There were also several responses which focused on the causes of unrest rather than discussing the seriousness of the threat. There were some candidates who widened their discussion and considered both unrest from food shortages and poverty, as well as parliamentary unrest. These provided valid opportunities and candidates were able to argue that the social issues of hunger and poverty were serious given the difficulty in resolving it, while parliamentary issues were settled through Elizabeth's golden speech.

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