

Examiners' report

AS LEVEL

HISTORY A

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

H105

For first teaching in 2015

Y136/01 Summer 2025 series

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper Y136/01 series overview	4
Section A overview	5
Question 1	5
Question 2	8
Section B overview	14
Question 3*	14
Question 4*	15

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate responses is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from [Teach Cambridge](#).

Would you prefer a Word version?

Did you know that you can save this PDF as a Word file using Acrobat Professional?

Simply click on **File > Export to** and select **Microsoft Word**

(If you have opened this PDF in your browser you will need to save it first. Simply right click anywhere on the page and select **Save as . . .** to save the PDF. Then open the PDF in Acrobat Professional.)

If you do not have access to Acrobat Professional there are a number of **free** applications available that will also convert PDF to Word (search for PDF to Word converter).

Paper Y136/01 series overview

Y136 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 must 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.

OCR support



You can find information on exam review webinars and other support events in **Training** on the horizontal menu within AS and A Level History A on [Teach Cambridge](#).

Section A overview

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 candidates 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 kings subjects consider that if speedy remedy is might bring
	*
	Source B states that 'the great disobedience remaining as among the kings subjects consider that if speedy remedy is not provided, both his majestys royal person and the whole state might be brought into Peril.' which shows how the disquiet of the kings subjects, if not rectified, will 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 kings 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 ~~also~~ 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



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 ~~issue~~ 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 another 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} accurate 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 candidates 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 does provide 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 different key topics. Here the candidates are asked to examine two key aspects of Henry VII's policies, the first focuses on the reasons for opposition to his rule and the second assesses the success or failings of his foreign policy. The questions set require candidates to analyse causes and consequences of major historical issues.

Question 3*

England 1485–1547

3* Assess the reasons why there was so much opposition to the rule of Henry VII.

[20]

Responses considered a range of reasons for opposition to Henry's rule. The common issues discussed included his weak claim to the throne and the nature of his seizure, opposition from Yorkists who were able to call on foreign support, particularly from Margaret of Burgundy, and the use of the pretenders Simnel and Warbeck. There was also discussion of his policies, particularly financial and his treatment of the nobility, which were often linked through issues such as bonds and recognisances, although some did discuss the issue of attainder and the number of nobility who were under these by the end of Henry's reign. Some responses discussed issues such as taxation and used the Yorkshire and Cornish rebellions as evidence of unrest, while others considered the importance of foreign powers who seized the opportunity to destabilise the state. There were several responses which placed the opposition into a wider context and argued that the Wars of the Roses had accustomed the nation to unrest and Henry's reign, or certainly the early years, was simply a continuation of this.

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* 'Henry VII failed to achieve his aims in foreign policy.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

The most successful responses established Henry's aims in the opening paragraph and then assessed the extent to which they were achieved in order to reach a judgement as to whether his foreign policy was a failure. Essays were usually structured in one of two ways, either discussing country by country or theme by theme and either approach allowed access to the top level provided judgements were reached. In discussing by country most considered relations with Spain and France, but others consider Burgundy and Scotland. In discussing by theme, issues such as national security, recognition and trade were common. Examiners did not expect all issues to be considered, but at least two had to be discussed in some detail for the higher levels to be accessed. There was some confusion over relations with France, particularly over the Breton Crisis. However, it was impressive to see the number who were able to discuss the final years of Henry's reign and consider the implications of the death of Isabella of Castile and the failure to secure either an anti-French or anti-Ferdinand alliance. Some stronger responses used Henry's exclusion from the League of Cambria at the end of his reign, along with these later failings to argue that early success with Medina del Campo changed over time.

Exemplar 3

4	B	As Henry VII became king post the battle of bosworth, it was necessary secure his position in the face of foreign threats such as france, spain and Scotland. In the this essay, the extent to which he was successful in his foreign policy could be measured by how it allowed him to secure his dynasty and his ability to neutralise/eliminate his opponents or threats, which were his aims. Henry VII's foreign policy with spain disputes the view in question as Henry VII was able to establish a close relationship with spain. This is evident as the Treaty of Medina del Campo in 1489 allowed Arthur and Catherine to become betrothed. Furthermore, Catherine's dowry was set at £40,000 and the Treaty supported each country over the threat of a french war. This shows that England's relationship
---	---	--

with Spain was important as Catherine's dowry was high and Henry VII wed his first son to Catherine, and so the Anglo-Spanish alliance was a success. This meant that Henry VII was able to secure his dynasty as the threat of France was reduced due to the support England had from Spain. Therefore, England's foreign policy with Spain was a success as it allowed ~~England~~ Henry VII monarchical title to be legitimised. However, some could argue that Henry's foreign policy with Spain was significantly weakened after the Castilian crisis where Ferdinand took over Castille. ~~This meant that England and Spain's alliance~~ Additionally, Arthur passed away when he was intended to stay married to Catherine. This shows that England and Spain's ties had been squandered and Henry's foreign policy was a failure. ~~However,~~ Despite this, Henry VII wed Catherine to ~~his~~ his son, Henry VIII showcasing how vital ~~sp~~ the Spanish alliance was to Henry VII. Whilst the ties between Spain and England were once loosened, ultimately their relationship remained strong through the prospect of marriage. Therefore, Henry VII's foreign policy with Spain was success as their relationship persisted as a result of Henry VIII's and Catherine's marriage.

		Henry VIII's foreign policy with France disputes the view in question as Henry was able to dismantle threatening behaviour from France. This is because the Treaty of Etaples in 1492 allowed Henry to gain a French pension of £159,000. Additionally, the Treaty negated the Auld Alliance between Scotland and France. This shows that Henry VIII was able to financially profit off of France whilst ensuring they cannot attack England through old alliances. This meant that Henry VIII was able to neutralise the threat of France as they were now unlikely to harm England. Therefore, Henry VIII foreign policy towards France was highly successful as he was able to fulfil his aims. However, this view could be contested as France supported (Charles VI) supported Warbeck. This shows that France was willing to str aid pretenders that could threaten Henry's dynasty, making them a persistent threat. However, the Charles stopped supporting Warbeck after the Treaty of Etaples, which demonstrates how Henry was able to successfully eliminate opposition. Whilst France's support for individuals who could have threatened Henry's reign existed, ultimately France stopped out of respect for their alliance with England. Therefore France and
--	--	--

		England's relationship demonstrated a successful foreign policy as the threats to Henry VII's reign had been eliminated.
		Henry VII foreign policy with Scotland disputes the view in question as Henry was able to eliminate the threat of Scotland through treaties. This is evident through the Truce of Ayton in 1497 which later formalised into the Treaty of Perpetual peace. This shows that the wars and violence between England and Scotland had been brought to an end through treaties. This means that Henry VII was able to successfully neutralise the threat of Scotland as they would no longer wage war or violence. Therefore Henry VII foreign policy with Scotland was successful as he brought an end to violence and wars between England and Scotland. However, this view could be contested as despite the truce, border raids still continued to happen. This shows that foreign policy was not translated to the Scottish and English people as they continued to attack each other. Despite this, Henry's foreign policy with Scotland was still successful as James decided to remove his support for pretenders such as Warbeck. This shows Henry VII success in neutralising opponents through foreign policy. Whilst border raids continued to demon-

		rate discontent amongst the English and Scottish people, ultimately the rulers were able to command peace, which allowed England to be free of any foreign threats. Therefore Henry VII's foreign policy was highly successful in achieving his aims as he.
		successfully
		In conclusion, Henry VII [^] achieved his aims in foreign policy to a highly significant degree as he was evidently able to secure his dynasty and eliminate his opponents with France, Scotland and Spain.

Exemplar 3 shows a response where judgements were evident and this was placed in Level 5, 18 marks. There is evidence of both interim judgements and an overall judgement. However, the overall judgement needed to be developed further in order to reach the very top of the level.

Supporting you

Teach Cambridge

Make sure you visit our secure website [Teach Cambridge](#) to find the full range of resources and support for the subjects you teach. This includes secure materials such as set assignments and exemplars, online and on-demand training.

Don't have access? If your school or college teaches any OCR qualifications, please contact your exams officer. You can [forward them this link](#) to help get you started.

Reviews of marking

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#).

Access to Scripts

We've made it easier for Exams Officers to download copies of your candidates' completed papers or 'scripts'. Your centre can use these scripts to decide whether to request a review of marking and to support teaching and learning.

Our free, on-demand service, Access to Scripts is available via our single sign-on service, My Cambridge. Step-by-step instructions are on our [website](#).

Keep up-to-date

We send a monthly bulletin to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, [sign up here](#).

OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular professional development courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

Signed up for ExamBuilder?

ExamBuilder is the exam paper builder platform for a range of our qualifications. [Find out more](#).

Free for all OCR centres with an Interchange account, it allows unlimited users per centre. We require an [Interchange](#) username to verify your centre's users for ExamBuilder.

If you do not have an Interchange account, please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username.

Once you have an Interchange username, use the form on [this page](#) to sign up for ExamBuilder, or ask an existing user at your centre to create an ExamBuilder account for you.

Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals (examined units only).

[Find out more](#).

Tell us what you think

Your feedback plays an important role in how we develop, market, support and resource qualifications now and into the future. We want you and your students to enjoy and get the best out of our qualifications and resources, but to do that we need your honest opinions to tell us whether we're on the right track or not.

You can email your thoughts to resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk or visit our [feedback page](#) to learn more about how you can help us improve our resources.



Designing and testing in [collaboration with you](#) and your students



Helping young people develop an [ethical view of the world](#)



Equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) are [part of everything we do](#)

Contact the team at:

☎ 01223 553998

🖥 ocr.org.uk

To stay up to date with all the relevant news about our qualifications, register for email updates at ocr.org.uk/updates

Visit our Online Support Centre at support.ocr.org.uk



OCR is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

OCR is a Company Limited by Guarantee and an exempt charity. Registered in England. Registered office: The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA. Registered company number: 3484466.

We operate academic and vocational qualifications regulated by Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA as listed in their qualifications registers.

We are committed to providing a fully accessible experience across all our products, platforms, and websites. Find out more about our [accessibility standards](#).

© OCR 2025. All rights reserved. We retain the copyright on all our publications. However, our registered centres are permitted to copy and distribute our material for their own internal use, in line with any specific restrictions detailed in the publication. Find out more about our [copyright policies](#).

We update our publications regularly so please check you have the most up-to-date version.

We cannot be held responsible for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and do not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

When we update our specifications, you'll see a new version number and a summary of the changes. While we do our best to reflect these changes in all associated resources on [Teach Cambridge](#), if you notice any discrepancies, please refer to the latest specification on our website and [let us know](#).

Our resources do not represent any teaching method we expect you to use. We cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in our resources.