

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

HISTORY A

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in History A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y103/01 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 Y103 series overview

Y103 is one of thirteen units in Paper 1 for the A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about fifty years through an Enquiries or source-based question and a traditional essay question. The paper is divided into two sections. In Section A, candidates have to answer a compulsory source question based on four written primary sources. The question requires them to use all four 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 an evaluation of the reliability of the evidence given, not on the topic or contextual knowledge. To reach Level 6, a judgement should be made at the end of the analysis of each source, with an overall judgement in the conclusion.

To do well on Section B, candidates need 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. To reach Level 6 candidates should also make an overall judgement as well as interim judgements when assessing each factor.

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 - the contextual knowledge was clearly linked 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 candidates discussed at least two issues in depth - provided supporting detail which was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic - reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question - made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to 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 of the sources - reached a judgement based on their knowledge rather than the sources - showed a limited understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay - 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

There is one compulsory question in this section. This question requires candidates to critically assess evidence and reach judgements. The critical evaluation of sources is the central theme in this section with all marks given against AO2.

The Enquiry section in Paper Y103 is focused on the extent to which King John suffered from the impact of the Interdict and his excommunication.

Question 1

King John 1199–1216

- 1 'King John did not suffer from the impact of the Interdict and his excommunication'.

Use the **four** sources in their historical context to assess how far they support this view. [30]

Candidates engaged with all four sources and, on the whole, demonstrated an ability to relate each one to the issue in the question. Source A, by Roger of Wendover, a Benedictine monk, highlights John's reaction to the Interdict, when he ordered the confiscation of ecclesiastical revenues. This was usually interpreted as evidence against the view in the question since the king actually benefited by seizing resources that had once been in the hands of bishoprics and abbeys. To support this interpretation, candidates often drew on knowledge of John's irreligious behaviour, notably the Canterbury dispute over the translation of John de Gray. Other candidates picked up on Roger's remark about the king's agents lacking the warrant to use physical violence against churchmen. This was seen, on the contrary, as evidence of John's sympathetic stance towards the clergy. This was more difficult to sustain, but it must be admitted that the king wasn't consistently hostile to the church.

Source B, by Gervase of Canterbury, another well-known chronicler, highlighted the broader impact of the Interdict on the English people. The king, therefore, did not suffer as such, but, as many candidates noted, the general population did. Knowledge used to support this interpretation included details of the Interdict, with Mass, for example, forbidden, but the baptism of infants allowed. Gervase was often seen as a reliable source here since his account almost certainly reflects what he himself saw at Canterbury. Candidates also linked Gervase's likely view of the king to the Canterbury dispute noted above.

The account of the Welsh attack provided by the Barnwell chronicler in Source C was well known by candidates. This, too, was interpreted as evidence to suggest that John did not, in the end, suffer as a result of the Interdict, since he was able to deal with the Welsh by hanging hostages. This was less convincing, since John never really met with much success in Wales, as the Barnwell chronicler hints at in the source.

Finally, Source D, from a royal charter, was interpreted as evidence against the view in the question, since, from candidates' own knowledge, and linked to Source A, the Interdict was ultimately financially beneficial for John. The provenance of this source caused difficulties for some candidates who saw it as a private document. It does provide a factual record of the arrangements and the fact that it culminates in a promise of their observance by the king and his successors is suggestive of its broader audience.

Many candidates were able to analyse the sources with some reference to knowledge and provenance, but fewer answers provided judgements linked to the issue in the question and based on consideration of the provenance of the sources.

Exemplar 1

1	As one of the defining periods of John's reign, there is significant historical debate regarding the impact of the Interdict on John and how much he suffered from it. The sources present a range of perspectives on this issue. Sources A and D provide convincing support for the view that the Interdict was not damaging to John: A, as the source says that John was able to convert monastic property to his use, and D as it reflects the advantageous nature of the Interdict's settlement for John. Sources B and C, however, support the contrasting view: that John suffered from the impact of the Interdict due to the restriction of religious services and the growing threat of Llywelyn in Wales. However, they are far less convincing than A and D as they are not supported by context, so taken as a collective the sources support the view that John did not suffer from the impact of the Interdict or his excommunication. Source B does not support the view that John did not suffer, but it is highly unconvincing in this view. The author explains how 'great sorrow' spread through England due to the restrictions on church
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services and burials on consecrated ground, thus disagreeing with the view that John did not suffer as it details the apparent public resentment of the Interdict, which would have impacted and damaged John's reputation. However, in analysing the source's provenance it is clear that the source must be treated with much caution. Although Gervase of Canterbury had a favourable view of John at the beginning of his reign, this view naturally shifted after 1208 - when this source was written - as Gervase's choice of archbishop, ~~Reginald~~ of Canterbury, Reginald, was dismissed by John, and John had expelled the Canterbury monks from Canterbury when the interdict was imposed, even giving his own men - Reginald of Cornhill and mercenary Fulk de Cantilupe - custody of the see to cement ~~that~~ ^{his} power. They acted with significant brutality. It is evident that Gervase would have resented these actions, which means that he was likely intending to frame John, and the interdict, in a negative light in writing this source. The source must therefore already be treated with caution, but this becomes even more apparent when the historical context

is considered. While it ~~was~~ is true that burial on consecrated ground was banned during the interdict, many aspects of religious life still continued, such as the distribution of Ashes on Ash Wednesday. Private religious services could also be held - crucial in limiting popular discontent towards the interdict. Moreover, as early as 1209 Innocent softened and allowed conventual church services to be held, clearly demonstrating that religious life was nowhere near as impacted as Gervase indicates. ~~Therefore, it is evident that~~ Therefore, although this source would have us believe that the Interdict was damaging to John as religious life was heavily affected and thus popular discontent grew, this is actually not the case - especially as John retained significant popular support throughout the Interdict. Therefore, the source ~~is~~ does not support the view that John did not ~~the~~ suffer but is highly unconvincing.

Source C, like source B, does not support the view that John did not suffer, but it is slightly more convincing than A in doing so. The source explains how the Interdict enabled the

Welsh to further threaten John and attack him, and how John 'gathered such a multitude of troops' but was ultimately unable to retaliate, thus clearly demonstrating how the Interdict was damaging in permitting the renewal of Welsh power. The source's provenance renders it more trustworthy, as the *Barnwell Chronicle* provided a balanced, mixed view of John throughout his reign, framing him as 'great but unlucky', and thus the negative depiction of John here is unlikely to have formed part of any particular agenda that the Chronicler had to frame him in such a way. Moreover, the specific events recounted in the source are supported by historical context, as Llywelyn, a Welsh prince, did launch a significant attack on John^{in 1212} as an act of vengeance for John's devastating 1211 invasion of Gwynedd. It is also true that John did gather an army, including 8000 craftsmen and labourers, in 1212 to counter-attack and implement Angevin authority in Wales, which never took off ~~at the time~~ ~~due to the plot to assassinate him~~ due to the plot to assassinate him. However, while all this

		is supported by historical evidence, the source's overall view that the Welsh attack, and was severely damaging to John Thus the interdict, was severely damaging for John is unconvincing: in fact, Welsh native prince Rarulf of Chester remained loyal to John - crucially - throughout the First Barons' War, demonstrating that worsened relations with Wales did not have a lasting damaging effect on John. Therefore, while the source's accurate account of events and highly reliable provenance render it more convincing, its disagreement with the view that John did not suffer is unconvincing as the Welsh rebellion it recounts did not have a permanent damaging impact on John's reign.
		Source A, by contrast to Sources B and C, supports the view that the Interdict was not damaging, and does so highly convincingly; it is far more convincing than B and C. Source A explains how John gave 'orders with dreadful threats' to clergymen to leave England, and 'converted all monastic property to John's use', thus supporting

the view as it shows how John profited from, rather than being damaged by, the interdict and his excommunication. An initial assessment of provenance makes this source appear unreliable. Roger of Wendover despised John, particularly during the interdict, as John ~~was~~ removed the prior of St Alban's during the period and forced monks there - including Wendover - to pay 600 marks to have him restored". Wendover's hatred of John was such that he often fabricated events to frame him in a worse light. The negative depiction of John here, and the extreme language such as 'enraged' and 'dreadful', is thus highly typical of Wendover, which initially makes the source appear unreliable and unconvincing in its support of the view. However, in reality it is very convincing as what Wendover describes is completely true: John did profit from converting monastic property to his own use. For example, in 1212 he redirected the revenues of Christchurch to himself to fund military equipment, including 2000 crossbow bolts. He also profited by receiving the revenues

from the 16 bishoprics which were absent by 1210. Therefore, this supports Wendover's interpretation of the effects of the Interdict for John, rendering the source very convincing in its view that John did not suffer.

~~Lastly, source D also supports the view that John did not suffer, and it is the most convincing of any of the sources. In the charter, John references that the 'Roman Church shall receive 1000 marks' each year. This clearly supports the view that John did not suffer.~~

Source D, however, does not support the view but it is unconvincing in doing so. In the charter, John says that the 'Roman Church shall receive 1000 marks each year' from England and Ireland - essentially, that England and Ireland would become papal fiefs, and John a papal vassal. This is highly reliable as this was one of the principal terms of the settlement of the Interdict and the source is taken from an official charter. However, in its disagreement

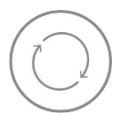
with the view that John did not suffer (as he had to become a vassal), it is unconvincing. Being a papal vassal was not serious at the time; Frederick of Hohenstaufen, the Holy Roman Emperor, was himself a papal vassal. Moreover, by becoming a papal vassal, John gained the support of the Pope, which hugely benefited him after the drafting of Magna Carta; Innocent supported John and annulled the charter, also excommunicating its supporters, helping John to rule unconstrained by baronial demands. Therefore, while initially the source appears to not support the view as it appears to be a damaging and negative turn of the settlement, in reality becoming a papal vassal was not damaging at all and was actually beneficial as it allowed John to have papal support at the most critical juncture of his reign: Magna Carta.

Overall therefore the source does support the view: while only source A explicitly supports it, it is highly convincing in doing so, and upon

		closer examination of source D it
		clearly - and convincingly - reflects
		source A's view that John actually
		benefitted from the interdict and wasn't
		damaged. Sources B and C do not
		support the view but they are highly
		unconvincing in comparison to sources
		B, A and D: B is not supported
		by historical context and C, while
		reliable, the events it recounts were
		not actually damaging to John in
		the long term. Therefore, as a
		collective the sources support the
		view that John was not damaged
		by the interdict and his
		excommunication.

Exemplar 1 is an example of a Level 5 response that has a good focus on the question, evaluation of sources using both knowledge and provenance, and judgement. The judgement is focused on the key issue in the question and is based on consideration of the provenance of the sources. There is also judgement elsewhere in the answer, but this is not extensive, and so the answer remains in Level 5.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should focus on how far the sources support the view in the question rather than simply explaining each source in light of the issue.

Assessment for learning



Judgements need to reference the provenance of each source if they are to be developed fully rather than simply noting whether each source supports the view or not.

Section B overview

Candidates are required to answer one essay from a choice of two. Each question is taken from a different Key Topic and requires candidates to weigh up the importance of a range of factors or issues.

There was an even spread of answers across the two questions.

Question 2*

England 1216–1272

2* 'England was effectively governed during the minority and early years of the reign of Henry III (1216–1232).'

How far do you agree?

[20]

Answers to this question tended to have more developed knowledge of the period of William Marshal's oversight of government than of the period after 1219 when the regency council consisted of Hubert de Burgh, Peter des Roches and Pandulf, the papal legate. Marshal's regency was considered very effective, with the decision to have Henry crowned at Gloucester in 1216, and his successful prosecution of the war against Prince Louis and the rebel barons, often cited as supporting evidence. Victory at the Battle of Lincoln was seen as evidence of his effectiveness, as well as his willingness to secure peace through compromise. The regency led by the triumvirate of de Burgh, des Roches and Pandulf, on the other hand, was seen as far less effective, largely because of the internal rivalries, factionalism, the corruption of des Roches, and Louis VIII's invasion of Poitou and Gascony. Similarly, government in the king's early years was also seen as less effective, notably through the revolt of Richard Marshal.

In order to reach the higher levels of the mark scheme, candidates need to provide a judgement on the key issue in the question. It is not enough simply to explain each factor even if the knowledge used is fairly detailed.

Exemplar 2

2	During 1216-32, England was governed effectively due to the removal of Louis from England and the success of the issuing of Magna Carta that allowed reclamation of land - despite the anger of the barons at de Burgh's incessant issuing of patronage. England was effectively governed during the minority due to the ease with which Prince Louis was removed from England after the Second Barons War. The Siege at Dover in September 1216 was won by Hubert de Burgh successfully which was an example of successful governance through how it prevented the French laying claim to the Port of Dover which
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would allow the back and forth of their troops to and from England. What most effectively showed the successful governance of England through the removal of Louis was the Treaty of Kingston Lambeth in September 1217 where Louis agreed to give up his claims to the English throne, ^{and leave England} Henry agreed to not pursue those on the baronial rebel side and to confirm Magna Carta. This evidences effective governance on two levels: it catalysed the swift and effective removal of Louis and his French allies from England so that he could no longer oppose Henry's royal position, whilst also ensuring peace within England through stating that rebel barons could not be pursued and confirming the Magna Carta, effectively ending any levels of ^{political} conflict between the barons and the king. Therefore the way in which Louis was removed from England after the First Barons' war is a clear example of the effectiveness of governance during 1216-32.

		Another aspect of the aftermath of 1216-32 was the reissuing of Magna Carta, and what it represented of the relationship between the king the barons and the Church. In 1225 the Magna Carta was reissued but now applied to all free men not only those of higher standing. This showed an emergence of respect from the royal side for the not only the barons but for those of ordinary standing as well. In addition it was this confirmation of Magna Carta that meant the barons allowed Henry to grant a tax of 1/15 on moveables, raising £40 000 to support his campaign in France. This is an example of <i>quid pro quo</i> , reflecting a changing baronial-royal relationship in how the barons and Henry had a respect for what the other wanted. Finally in 1225 the Magna Carta was confirmed by Stephen Langton the Archbishop of Canterbury which was a big step as the Pope had annulled the original charter in 1215. Therefore overall the confirmation of the Magna Carta in 1225 is greatly
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representative of the effective governance of England through how it secured peace between barons and Henry and represented a change towards mutual understanding between the two sides. It also allowed Henry to grant a significant tax that would support his campaign to Gascony, ~~there~~ helping in the reclamation of old Angevin lands that would significantly help his position against the French.

Whilst the majority of governance was effective from 1216-32 the abuse of patronage by Hubert de Burgh that led to some anger was one aspect in which it was not so effective. de Burgh had Henry under his control which meant that Henry gave de Burgh immense amounts of privilege and patronage. He gave him an income of the great sum of £200 marks per year along with the promise of justiciarship for life. He granted him the earldoms of Kent ^{and} Derby ~~also~~ in 1228. This represents a significant lack of effective governance through how

2		it represented a weakness in the government wherein the regent was able to control the monarch to whatever extent he wished, also stirring up baronial discontent in how de Burgh favoured himself over barons or landlords who had been consistently loyal to Henry. This is a direct counter-action of the softening of baronial-royal relations as aforementioned due to the confirming of Magna Carta. However whilst this abuse of power from de Burgh does represent a lack of effective governance it does not do so to ex a significant enough extent to oppose the view in the question.
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this is because the success brought by the confirmation of Magna Carta by both the monarch and the Pope had been something the barons had been hoping for since it was first issued ten years prior. Therefore overall this factor cannot to a significant extent oppose the view that England was governed effectively from 1216-32.

In conclusion England was governed incredibly effectively during 1216-32. Although the removal of Louis from England that prevented him from challenging Henry's power further, along with the confirmation of the Magna Carta in 1225 that made baronial-royal relations better and allowed a successful Gascon expedition. de Beugh's excess patronage could not counteract these successes due to its limited impact in comparison to the incredible influence of the confirmation of Magna Carta on the relationship between Henry, the barons and the Church.

Exemplar 2 is an example of a Level 5 response which has a mostly consistent focus on the question, generally accurate and detailed knowledge, and a substantiated judgement. There is little judgement elsewhere in the answer and so it doesn't demonstrate the developed and sustained judgements needed for Level 6.

Question 3*

- 3* How important was the emergence of the Lord Edward in ensuring that Simon de Montfort's seizure of power in 1263 was short-lived?

[20]

Many candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge and understanding of the Lord Edward's role in ensuring that de Montfort's seizure of power was short-lived, noting, in particular, his impressive record as a military leader (as at the Battle of Lewes in 1264 and as he would demonstrate at Evesham in 1265), his ability to win the support of key nobles like Gilbert de Clare, and his status as Henry III's heir. Indeed, the Lord Edward was often seen as the most important factor in bringing de Montfort's rule to an end. Other factors considered included de Montfort's character, with many finding him aloof, arrogant and high-handed, and the nepotism which prompted him to enrich his own son, his small support base (in comparison to Edward, as the royal heir), and his inability to govern effectively. As with Question 2, some candidates provided fairly detailed explanations of some of these factors without providing a judgement on the issue in the question. In order to reach the higher levels of the mark scheme, judgement along these lines is needed.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should provide a judgement in response to the question which is focused on the key issue and substantiated with a convincing explanation.

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