



General Certificate of Education

A2 History 2041

Unit 3: HIS3B

The Triumph of Elizabeth: Britain, 1547–1603

Mark Scheme

Specimen mark scheme for examinations in June 2010 onwards
This mark scheme uses the [new numbering system](#)

The specimen assessment materials are provided to give centres a reasonable idea of the general shape and character of the planned question papers and mark schemes in advance of the operational exams.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

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Generic Introduction for A2

The A2 History specification is based on the assessment objectives laid down in QCA's GCE History subject criteria and published in the AQA specification booklet. These cover the skills, knowledge and understanding which are expected of A Level candidates. Most questions address more than one objective since a good historian must be able to combine a range of skills and knowledge. Consequently, the marking scheme which follows is a 'levels of response' scheme and assesses candidates' historical skills in the context of their knowledge and understanding of History.

The levels of response are a graduated recognition of how candidates have demonstrated their abilities in the Assessment Objectives. Candidates who predominantly address AO1(a) by writing narrative or description will perform at Level 1 or low Level 2 if some comment is included. Candidates who provide more explanation – (AO1(b), supported by the relevant selection of material, AO1(a)) – will perform at Level 2 or low Level 3 depending on their synoptic understanding and linkage of ideas. Candidates who provide explanation with evaluation, judgement and an awareness of historical interpretations will be addressing all 3 AOs (AO1(a); AO1(b); AO2(b)) and will have access to the higher mark ranges.

To obtain an award of Level 3 or higher, candidates will need to address the synoptic requirements of A Level. The open-ended essay questions set are, by nature, synoptic and encourage a range of argument. Differentiation between performance at Levels 3, 4, and 5 therefore depends on how a candidate's knowledge and understanding are combined and used to support an argument and the how that argument is communicated.

The mark scheme emphasises features which measure the extent to which a candidate has begun to '*think like a historian*' and show higher order skills. As indicated in the level criteria, candidates will show their historical understanding by:

- The way the requirements of the question are interpreted
- The quality of the arguments and the range/depth/type of material used in support
- The presentation of the answer (including the level of communication skills)
- The awareness and use of differing historical interpretations
- The degree of independent judgement and conceptual understanding shown

It is expected that A2 candidates will perform to the highest level possible for them and the requirements for Level 5, which demands the highest level of expertise have therefore been made deliberately challenging in order to identify the most able candidates.

CRITERIA FOR MARKING GCE HISTORY:

A2 EXAMINATION PAPERS

General Guidance for Examiners (to accompany Level Descriptors)

Deciding on a level and the award of marks within a level

It is of vital importance that examiners familiarise themselves with the generic mark scheme and apply it consistently, as directed by the Principal Examiner, in order to facilitate comparability across options.

The indicative mark scheme for each paper is designed to illustrate some of the material that candidates might refer to (knowledge) and some of the approaches and ideas they might develop (skills). It is not, however, prescriptive and should only be used to exemplify the generic mark scheme.

When applying the generic mark scheme, examiners will constantly need to exercise judgement to decide which level fits an answer best. Few essays will display all the characteristics of a level, so deciding the most appropriate will always be the first task.

Each level has a range of marks and for an essay which has a strong correlation with the level descriptors the middle mark should be given. However, when an answer has some of the characteristics of the level above or below, or seems stronger or weaker on comparison with many other candidates' responses to the same question, the mark will need to be adjusted up or down.

When deciding on the mark within a level, the following criteria should be considered *in relation to the level descriptors*. Candidates should never be doubly penalised. If a candidate with poor communication skills has been placed in Level 2, he or she should not be moved to the bottom of the level on the basis of the poor quality of written communication. On the other hand, a candidate with similarly poor skills, whose work otherwise matched the criteria for Level 4 should be adjusted downwards within the level.

Criteria for deciding marks within a level:

- Depth and precision in the use of factual information
- Depth and originality in the development of an argument
- The extent of the synoptic links
- The quality of written communication (grammar, spelling, punctuation and legibility; an appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of ideas, including the use of specialist vocabulary)
- The way the answer is brought together in the conclusion

Specimen Mark Scheme for examinations in June 2010 onwards

A2 Unit 3: The State and the People: Change and Continuity

HIS3B: The Triumph of Elizabeth: Britain 1547–1603

Question 1

- 01** 'Between 1547 and 1559 England was almost torn apart by religious revolution.'
Assess the validity of this view. (45 marks)

Target: AO1(a), AO1(b), AO2(b)

Generic Mark Scheme for essays at A2

- L1:** Answers will display a limited understanding of the demands of the question. They may **either** contain some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question **or** they may address only a part of the question. Alternatively, they may contain some explicit comment but will make few, if any, synoptic links and will have limited accurate and relevant historical support. There will be little, if any, awareness of differing historical interpretations. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **0-6**
- L2:** Answers will show some understanding of the demands of the question. They will **either** be primarily descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they may contain explicit comment but show limited relevant factual support. They will display limited understanding of differing historical interpretations. Historical debate may be described rather than used to illustrate an argument and any synoptic links will be undeveloped. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **7-15**
- L3:** Answers will show a good understanding of the demands of the question. They will provide some assessment, backed by relevant and appropriately selected evidence, which may, however, lack depth. There will be some synoptic links made between the ideas, arguments and information included although these may not be highly developed. There will be some understanding of varying historical interpretations. Answers will be clearly expressed and show reasonable organisation in the presentation of material. **16-25**
- L4:** Answers will show a very good understanding of the demands of the question. There will be synoptic links made between the ideas, arguments and information included showing an overall historical understanding. There will be a good understanding and use of differing historical interpretations and debate and the answer will show judgement through sustained argument backed by a carefully selected range of precise evidence. Answers will be well-organised and display good skills of written communication. **26-37**
- L5:** Answers will show a full understanding of the demands of the question. The ideas, arguments and information included will be wide-ranging, carefully chosen and closely interwoven to produce a sustained and convincing answer with a high level of synopticity. Conceptual depth, independent judgement and a mature historical understanding, informed by a well-developed understanding of historical interpretations and debate, will be displayed. Answers will be very well-structured and fluently written. **38-45**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

There is much evidence that could be used by candidates in agreement with the key quotation:

- Some historians like Diarmaid McCulloch see Edward VI as a committed Protestant reformer, genuinely in favour of 'religious revolution'
- There were many instances of Protestant radicalism affecting local communities through such things as attacks on 'idolatry'
- The rebellions of 1549, especially in the South West, had strong religious motives; and the rebellions of 1553 and 1554 can both be seen as at least partly anti-Catholic in intent
- Mary I undoubtedly launched a religious counter-revolution, accompanied by widespread persecution
- The key issue for Elizabeth I when she came to the throne was to somehow neutralise the sources of religious conflict and achieve a stable compromise settlement

On the other hand, many answers may argue convincingly that the upheavals of 1547 to 1559 were far from 'tearing apart England'. It can be argued that the depth of religious divisions has been over-emphasised by propagandists and historians; and that Elizabeth I found it relatively easy to formulate an acceptable compromise settlement. Many historians have suggested that rebellions and disorder at this time did not arise only or even primarily from disputes over religion but were more concerned with social and political issues.

Effective answers may differentiate according to changes over time – some answers, for example, may argue that there was relative stability under Mary I because most people were broadly conservative in matters of religion but, on the other hand, there really was 'religious revolution' in the reign of Edward. The key requirement is for a balanced and well-argued assessment, supported by well-chosen evidence.

The key dates should be observed. There is much to say about the reign of Edward VI and answers cannot be expected to be comprehensive or even in coverage – but the years after 1553 relating to Mary I and to the significance of the accession of Elizabeth must be addressed.

Question 2

- 02** 'Between 1571 and 1588, the Catholic threat to Elizabeth, both at home and abroad, was neutralised with relative ease.'
How convincing is this view? (45 marks)

Target: AO1(a), AO1(b), AO2(b)

Generic Mark Scheme for essays at A2

- L1:** Answers will display a limited understanding of the demands of the question. They may **either** contain some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question **or** they may address only a part of the question. Alternatively, they may contain some explicit comment but will make few, if any, synoptic links and will have limited accurate and relevant historical support. There will be little, if any, awareness of differing historical interpretations. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **0-6**
- L2:** Answers will show some understanding of the demands of the question. They will **either** be primarily descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they may contain explicit comment but show limited relevant factual support. They will display limited understanding of differing historical interpretations. Historical debate may be described rather than used to illustrate an argument and any synoptic links will be undeveloped. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **7-15**
- L3:** Answers will show a good understanding of the demands of the question. They will provide some assessment, backed by relevant and appropriately selected evidence, which may, however, lack depth. There will be some synoptic links made between the ideas, arguments and information included although these may not be highly developed. There will be some understanding of varying historical interpretations. Answers will be clearly expressed and show reasonable organisation in the presentation of material. **16-25**
- L4:** Answers will show a very good understanding of the demands of the question. There will be synoptic links made between the ideas, arguments and information included showing an overall historical understanding. There will be a good understanding and use of differing historical interpretations and debate and the answer will show judgement through sustained argument backed by a carefully selected range of precise evidence. Answers will be well-organised and display good skills of written communication. **26-37**
- L5:** Answers will show a full understanding of the demands of the question. The ideas, arguments and information included will be wide-ranging, carefully chosen and closely interwoven to produce a sustained and convincing answer with a high level of synopticity. Conceptual depth, independent judgement and a mature historical understanding, informed by a well-developed understanding of historical interpretations and debate, will be displayed. Answers will be very well-structured and fluently written. **38-45**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Many answers will disagree strongly with the key quotation, arguing convincingly that the Catholic threat was indeed exceedingly dangerous – and widely seen to be so at the time:

- Ministers such as Burghley and Walsingham saw Mary Stuart as the nexus of a deadly danger that could only be averted by drastic measures
- The Pope's excommunication was a real threat, legitimising attempts to topple or to assassinate Elizabeth and encouraging the activities of missionary Catholic priests within England as well as foreign invasion led by Catholic monarchs
- The various Catholic plots may be seen in retrospect as harmless failures but only with the wisdom of hindsight. Continental Europe provided stark examples (such as the French Wars of Religion and the assassination of William of Orange) of what might easily have happened in England
- The Armada was a deadly threat in 1588; and disaster was averted only/mainly because of English luck and Spanish errors

On the other hand, there are convincing arguments that the Catholic threat was exaggerated and was indeed dealt with relatively easily. Arguments might include:

- Most English Catholics would have been happy to be left alone to follow their traditional religion – they had no wish to overthrow the state
- There was little danger to internal security from the missionary priests arriving from abroad. They were few in number and had little impact outside a few Catholic households
- The various plots against Elizabeth such as those of 1571 and 1586 were well-known to the authorities in advance and quickly crushed
- The Armada was a doomed enterprise lacking the diplomatic unity or the military strength to have any realistic prospect of success

One feature of effective answers may be the ability to differentiate between factors of greater or lesser importance. Some candidates, for example, may argue persuasively that the internal threats were minimal but that the external dangers were truly menacing. The key requirement is a balanced argument, showing awareness of the issues and supported by well-chosen evidence.

Note that the key words 'at home and abroad' must be addressed. Answers cannot be expected to be comprehensive or even in coverage but both internal and external threats must be considered. Answers dealing exclusively with one or the other will be assessed as badly unbalanced.

Question 3

- 03** 'During the last years of Elizabeth's reign, England became an increasingly unstable kingdom, menaced by crisis and disillusionment.'
Assess the validity of this view. (45 marks)

Target: AO1(a), AO1(b), AO2(b)

Generic Mark Scheme for essays at A2

- L1:** Answers will display a limited understanding of the demands of the question. They may **either** contain some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question **or** they may address only a part of the question. Alternatively, they may contain some explicit comment but will make few, if any, synoptic links and will have limited accurate and relevant historical support. There will be little, if any, awareness of differing historical interpretations. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **0-6**
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- L4:** Answers will show a very good understanding of the demands of the question. There will be synoptic links made between the ideas, arguments and information included showing an overall historical understanding. There will be a good understanding and use of differing historical interpretations and debate and the answer will show judgement through sustained argument backed by a carefully selected range of precise evidence. Answers will be well-organised and display good skills of written communication. **26-37**
- L5:** Answers will show a full understanding of the demands of the question. The ideas, arguments and information included will be wide-ranging, carefully chosen and closely interwoven to produce a sustained and convincing answer with a high level of synopticity. Conceptual depth, independent judgement and a mature historical understanding, informed by a well-developed understanding of historical interpretations and debate, will be displayed. Answers will be very well-structured and fluently written. **38-45**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

The key quotation presents a view of late Elizabethan England as a 'creaking regime', far different from the traditional view of a triumphant 'Golden Age'. Successful answers will be based on a balanced argument that resolves this debate.

Much evidence can be adduced in support of the idea of an 'increasingly unstable kingdom', following the arguments of historians such as Robert Ashton. These include:

- The growing problems in Ireland
- The intensifying struggles between the factions around the ageing Queen, especially as the influence of the younger Cecil increased
- The failures in the continuing privateering war against Spain and the pressures to bring it to an end
- The growing tensions with Parliament as radical Puritanism gained ground
- The mounting social crisis of regional hardship and the violent disorders by 'sturdy beggars' that led to the Poor Law legislation of 1598–1601.

Answers arguing against this pessimistic view have much evidence to work with. Some historians point to the considerable long-term achievements of Elizabeth's reign and her enduring popularity and prestige. England had far greater peace and internal stability in the 1590s than many parts of Continental Europe. There was considerable expansion in the urban economy and in overseas trade. England's relationships with foreign powers were mostly peaceful and stable – a huge contrast with the life-and-death perils of the 1580s.