A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505
For first teaching in 2015

Y206/01 Summer 2019 series
Version 1

Contents

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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. 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 can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper Y206/01 series overview

Y206 is one of twenty four units for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about one hundred years through a short answer essay and a traditional essay. The paper contains two questions, each having two parts, a short answer essay and a traditional essay and candidates have to answer both parts of one question.

To do well on the short essay question (a), candidates need to consider the significance or importance both issues, factors, individuals or events mentioned in relation to the question. Having analysed or explained both they must reach a supported judgement as to which is the most important or significant.

To do well on the traditional essay, 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.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	*Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:*
- gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short answer essay - reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important - linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of 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 - made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question.	- considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way - produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response - were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question - showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay - were unable to support their answer with relevant or accurate material - did not focus on the precise wording of the question - made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

Question 1 (a)

1 (a) Which of the following was of greater importance as a reason for opposition to Charles I as King of Spain, 1516–1520?

    (i) The influence of foreign advisers

    (ii) The actions of Charles I

    Explain your answer with reference to both **(i)** and **(ii)**.   **[10]**

This was the more popular question. The strongest answers provided a balanced approach and gave equal attention to the two issues, however they often argued that it was Charles' actions in appointing Burgundians to roles in Spain that caused opposition and therefore it was his actions that were more important. Most were able to write in some depth about Charles' actions, often commenting on his delay in coming to Spain, his demands for money, decision to become Emperor and his approach to the Cortes. These issues were usually well explained, but importantly, were linked to the creation of opposition and many made reference to the role his actions played in the Comuneros and Germania revolts. In discussing the influence of foreign advisors most answers were able to explain the dislike of Castilians in particular for foreigners and their opposition to the appointment of a Burgundian as regent until Charles arrived. The stronger answers were aware of the removal of Cisneros and the appointment of Adrian of Utrecht and the considerable patronage that was given to foreign advisors. The strongest answers linked this to opposition and were again able to link this to the demands of the revolts.

Question 1 (b)

(b)* How successful were Isabella and Ferdinand in their attempts to control the Catholic Church in Spain?   **[20]**

The question required responses to focus on 'control' and this was the greatest challenge for many, who knew a great deal about the religious policies of Ferdinand and Isabella. Answers tended to drift towards success and failure of their religious policies and this led to a partial answer that, at best, reached Level 4. The stronger answers did have a greater focus on control and considered issues such as the Inquisition, the appointment of bishops, taxation and the title of Catholic monarchs. The more able candidates were however able to link issues such as reform or the conquest of Granada to control and it was often this that distinguished good answers from those who knew a great deal about church and monastic reform under Cisneros but discussed success and/or failure. These answers often argued that well trained clerics were more likely to do the bidding of the monarchs and uphold the practices they wished to be followed rather than previous appointees who held posts because of their birth and were often absentees. Less well focused answers described the war in Granada and the policies towards both the Moors and the Jews without really linking these issues to the question of control of the Catholic church and seemed to associate control of the Catholic church with converting the population of Spain to one religion.

Question 2 (a)

2   (a)   Which of the following was of greater importance in the exploration of the New World before
           1522?

           (i)   Columbus

           (ii)   Cortes

           Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).   [10]

Although less popular than Question 1, there were still a number of responses to this question. Most were able to explain the significance of the two individuals in relation to the exploration of the New World, while weaker responses simply described what they did, with some providing lengthy descriptions of the defeat of the Aztecs. In considering their importance, candidates weighed up the importance of the first discovery against the large area that Cortes opened up and the wealth that it would bring to Spain. Some argued that without the first discovery the later voyages would not have occurred, while others argued that Columbus' achievements were limited in terms of both the geography and wealth generated. Either argument was acceptable provided it was supported. There were some who confused the explorer Cortes with the institution and were therefore unable to write anything of relevance. Some argued that Cortes was of greater importance as it was of greater significance in opening up large areas to Spanish exploration and encouraged further voyages, while others argued that the desire of Isabella to spread Catholicism with Columbus' voyages meant that had greater importance.

Question 2 (b)

           (b)* 'The conciliar system was the main reason for political stability in Spain after 1524.' How far
                 do you agree?   [20]

Candidates displayed a sound knowledge of some of the reasons as to why political stability developed in Spain after 1524, but were less able to explain the role played by the conciliar system in this development. Many were able to explain what the conciliar system was and the importance of 'letrados', but found it much harder to link this to the question of stability. However, responses were much stronger in dealing with issues such as Charles learning the language, his subsequent marriage and the extent to which he addressed the issues that had caused the Comuneros and Germania revolts. Some commented on the importance of the nobility and how they now rallied behind the monarch, fearing unrest and how Charles developed a closer affinity with Spain, and in particular Castile. There were comments about his use of locals rather than foreigners and how wife was more acceptable to the Spaniards when he was away dealing with events in the Empire. Some strong answers also commented on the religious stability and contrasted that with other areas in Europe which witnessed the reformation and therefore commented on the role of the Inquisition. There were also comments that Spain was now more willing to accept Charles and his long stay following his return helped to cement a bond between the two and convince many that he did care about the country. However, there were some responses that lacked the knowledge of the period post 1524 and focused more on why there had been unrest and simply suggested that Charles removed the causes without providing any examples.

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