A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505
For first teaching in 2015

Y207/01 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 Y207/01 series overview

Y207 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	• considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way
• reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important	• produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response
• linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question	• were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question
• in answering the essay question, discussed at least two issues in depth	• showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay
• gave supporting detail that was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic	• were unable to support their answer with relevant or accurate material
• reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question	• did not focus on the precise wording of the question
• made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question.	• made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

Question 1 (a)

1　　(a)　Which of the following was a greater concern for Charles V in his foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire?

　　　　(i)　The threat to the Mediterranean

　　　　(ii)　The situation in the Balkans

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

The majority of candidates who answered this question were able to provide a range of examples and explanation in order to support their argument. A number argued that the threat in the Balkans was less serious because of the responsibility of Ferdinand or because the Ottomans failed to take Vienna. However, others argued that the situation was a threat because the Ottomans had the potential to threaten the Habsburg lands. Other responses argued that the threat in the Mediterranean was greater because of the challenges to the economy and the threat to the route between Spain and Naples, while others pointed to the successes of the Barbary pirates. There was some discussion of the territory taken by both the Ottomans and Charles and this was related back to the concerns of Charles in his conduct of foreign policy. Candidates often considered the agreements reached between the Barbary pirates and the French monarch which impacted on Charles' foreign policy and also had an impact on his dealings with the Lutherans. The depth of knowledge displayed was often impressive and candidates were able to link this material to Charles' foreign policy and reach a supported judgement.

Question 1 (b)

(b)*　Assess the reasons why it was not possible to reconcile Luther to the Catholic Church in the years 1517–1529.　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**[20]**

Most candidates who tackled this question were able to discuss a number of reasons as to why it was not possible to reconcile Luther to the Catholic church, however there were some responses where the answer was less well-focused on the actual question set and instead candidates tended to focus on why Lutheranism was able to spread in its early years and then simply suggest that the spread meant that reconciliation was not needed. The strongest answers showed a good understanding of the early developments, particularly of Luther's developing theology and views about the papacy and used this to argue that it was the most important reason. Many also commented on the attitude of the papacy and its representatives in the early years of the clash and suggested that the papacy was to blame. Some argued that the protection given to Luther by Frederick was crucial and then linked this to the development of Luther's ideas, which it was suggested created a greater divide with the papacy. There were many responses that did comment on the large support there was within Germany for Luther and his ideas and suggested that this made reconciliation more difficult and that it made Luther less willing or unable to compromise his views. A number of responses commented don the political situation within the Empire and the attitude and position of Charles within the Empire, suggesting that this made reconciliation more difficult as he could not enforce edicts and had to take a lenient position which allowed Lutheranism to develop further and make it more difficult to bring about reconciliation. There were many strong answers to this question where candidates analysed a range of reasons and were able to reach a supported judgement, taking responses into Level 5, while the strongest answer made links between factors or made interim judgements which were built on in a supported conclusion, taking the response into Level 6.

Question 2 (a)

2 (a) Which of the following was a more significant reason why the Habsburg-Valois conflict was so long lasting during the rule of Charles V?

  (i)   The decisions and leadership of Francis I

  (ii) The decisions and leadership of Charles V

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

As with Question 1a, there were many responses which showed a good knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding the Habsburg-Valois conflict. Both issues were seen as important with candidates equally split as to who was more responsible for the long-lasting nature of the conflict. Many were able to support their argument with precise examples over issues such as Milan, the Treaty of Madrid and the question of the Burgundian lands. The strongest responses often considered two or three issues on each side in some depth and with a developed judgement this was sufficient to take the response to the highest level. It is important that both centres and candidates are aware that it is not expected in the short answer questions that all issues are covered and that they should not spend too long on this question and therefore adversely affect their performance on the longer answer question. Many were able to write about the personal actions of both leaders and attention was often given to the Battle of Pavia and the subsequent Treaty of Madrid and developments that followed in order to explain the length of the conflict. Some responses wrote in detail about Francis' relations with the Ottomans and Lutherans in order to explain how and why the conflict continued. This was often balanced against Charles' desire to recover the Burgundian lands lost in the fifteenth century and the range and complexity of problems facing Charles. In some instances strong explanations were prevented from reaching the very top as candidates did not develop their overall judgement.

Question 2 (b)

(b)* 'The Ottomans never seriously threatened the territories of Charles V during the years 1520–1555.' How far do you agree?   **[20]**

Responses that attempted this question were usually able to show a good range of knowledge and examples to support their argument. The strongest responses focused on the key element of 'never seriously threatened', rather just analysing the threat posed by Ottomans. In order to produce a balanced response candidates did need to cover the threat posed in both the Balkans and in the Mediterranean. There was discussion as to how far the Ottomans threatened Charles' territories in Central Europe with reference to events such as Belgrade, Vienna and Guns, with some arguing these showed a serious threat that Ferdinand was fortunate to deal with, while others argued that the length of Ottoman supply lines meant this was never a serious threat. In dealing with the threat in the Mediterranean, many made reference to the problem posed to the supply lines and the economy, most notably with the supply of grain. There were also comments about whether this was a serious threat as they were often just raids, although some suggested that there were concerns that there might be attempts to link up with the Moors in Spain. There was discussion about the strength of Charles' navy and its ability to counter the threat of Barbarossa and candidates were able to bring in the importance of the support of Doria, the success at La Goletta and its significance. Many responses made reference to the wintering of the Ottoman fleet at Toulon and the threat this posed and this was often linked to the agreement with the French and the scale of problems Charles faced in his monarqia. The strongest answers were able to distinguish between the threat posed in the different areas and use this to make interim judgements.

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