

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505


For first teaching in 2015


Y320/01 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper Y320/01 series overview	4
Question 1	5
Question 2	12
Question 3	18
Question 4	18


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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 Y320/01 series overview

Y320 is one of twenty one components for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This component tests an extended period of History of at least one hundred years through an interpretation option on a named in depth topic and two essays. The paper is divided into two sections. In Section A candidates are required to use contextual knowledge to test the views of two historians about one of the three named in depth topics or an aspect of one. The question does not require them to comment on the style of writing or the provenance of the interpretation. In Section B candidates are required to answer two essay questions from a choice of three. To do well on Section A, candidates need to explain the view of each interpretation in relation to the question and then evaluate the interpretation by the application of contextual knowledge. Responses should show an understanding of the wider debate connected to the issue. To do well on Section B, candidates need to make connections and links across the whole period, explaining similarities and differences between the events they are discussing in order to show an awareness of continuity and change across the whole period unless instructed otherwise. The comparisons made may be either between periods within the topic or between regions. The strongest answers will test a hypothesis and reach a supported judgement.

<i>Candidates who did well</i>	<i>Candidates who did less well</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showed a clear understanding of the views of the two interpretations in relation to the question. • Were able to use contextual knowledge to test the interpretations, linking that knowledge directly to the interpretation through evaluative words. • Were able to consider both the strengths and limitations of both Interpretations using contextual knowledge. • In answering the essay questions, covered the whole period in a balanced way. • Adopted a thematic approach. • Made links and comparisons between aspects of the topic. • Explained the links and comparisons. • Supported their arguments with precise and relevant examples. • Reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question. • Demonstrated an understanding and familiarity with the different command verbs e.g. identify, describe, explain and discuss. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showed a limited understanding of one or both of the interpretations. • Did not go beyond a basic explanation of part of the interpretation. • Did not link any contextual knowledge directly to the interpretation and therefore did not evaluate the interpretation. • In answering the essay adopted a chronological rather than thematic approach. • Did not make links or comparisons even if events from different parts of the period were discussed in the same paragraph. • Did not cover the whole period. • Did not focus on the precise wording of the question. • Made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

Question 1

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the nature of the events of 1857. [30]

The interpretation question was, on the whole, answered well. The majority of candidates were able to access the higher levels by clearly linking their own knowledge to the views and opinions mentioned. At the top end, candidates used precise and accurate own knowledge, explaining that A argues that unrest was focused on a dislike of British rule whereas B argues the converse view, that the events of 1857 are complex and cut across usually accepted divisions.

The most successful answers dealt with each interpretation in turn before coming to a measured conclusion. Answers which attempted a thematic approach often were confused and lacked evaluation, leading to an essay-like approach. Centres should be aware that credit is given in assessing the relative convincingness of the views that are present in each interpretation. Answers which proceeded to list impacts that were not present in each interpretation did not score highly, as they were not explicitly evaluating the view of each historian. This was often highlighted or prefixed by the phrase "fails to mention". Candidates should focus on the actual views presented and test them against historical knowledge.

Centres should also be aware that there is no requirement to mention other historians.

In regard to Interpretation A, the majority of candidates were able explain the impact of British rule on India. Those at lower levels merely described the interpretation. As for Interpretation B, most were able to identify that the nature of events was not merely down to hatred of the British. In the lower levels, however, many critiqued information that wasn't in the interpretation, rather than focusing on the content of Interpretation B.

Exemplar 1 was marked in Level 6.

Exemplar 1

1		<p>Both passage A and B explore the nature of the events of 1857, with passage B presenting the view that the rebellion was a 'watershed' moment, with rebels being drawn from many parts of society. Whilst this interpretation certainly has some merit, passage A presents the much more convincing view in recognising that the revolt was a largely unorganised collection of peasants that lacked any real leadership, and also presents the opposing view of from key, seeing the rebellion as not much of a threat to the British.</p>
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Overall, it is clear that Passage A presents the most accurate and multifaceted understanding of the 1857 rebellion, and is thus most convincing.

Passage A presents the ~~view~~ ^{view} that the events of 1857 were lacking in any real leadership - "no nationalist leadership emerged". This is supported by the fact that even with the "tradition-bound monarchies" that the rebels sought to restore, they found little strong leadership, with King Awadh himself not really wishing to be restored to the crown. This shows that the rebellion was not a serious organisation, like the likes of

later ~~nationalist~~ nationalist movements, who provided strong leadership and a unified goal (e.g. Gandhi). Wolpe also presents the notion that the rebellion was largely a peasant revolt, born from economic grievances and "excessive taxation". This is supported by the fact that during the rebellion, peasants stormed town centres and burned down cutcheries, administrative hubs for taxation records. This shows that the rebellion was far from a "war of independence", as the rebels were ~~not~~ ^{were} driven by their economic situations, not the British. The ~~same~~ ^{same} ~~also~~ interpretation also recognises that a "~~few~~ ^{few} hatred of the foreigner" united the rebels, seen in the

fact that the British ~~were~~ attempted to 'civilise' the Indians by removing and campaigning against cultural practices, such as sati (the burning of a widow at her husband's funeral pyre) and female infanticide. ~~But~~ This caused great anger amongst the Indians, and thus led to the rebellion, showing that the event was in some sense unified, although limited. Overall, Wolpert presents a very convincing view, especially that not only was the rebellion largely peasant based, without

any leadership, but it also addressed the issue in realising there was some level of unification in beliefs.

However, passage ~~is~~ is not completely perfect, with Wolpert perhaps somewhat overstating the extent to which the British were confident in the "Raj" and "their military capacity". Wolpert fails to recognise that within India the British were so far outnumbered in the army by sepoys, that the rebellion was in fact somewhat dangerous to them, with there being 120,000 sepoys in the Bengal army. Whilst these British could draw upon forces from home, India was quite poor, and there existed a real fear that it would fall ~~and~~ from British control. Furthermore, the length that the siege of Meerut took also demonstrates that the

rebellion was a cause for concern for the British, who ~~was~~ upon seeing their (control) over India in 1858 went to great lengths to ensure such a rebellion would never occur, such as military reform in making the army ratio 2:1 (Indian to British), granting higher pay to Sepoys and turning Calcutta into a military base. This shows that

the rebellion was quite serious to the British, who had to go to such lengths to ensure that such a rebellion never happened again. This ~~is~~ somewhat limits the viewpoint forward by Wolpe as it minimised the extent to which the rebellion was a danger to British rule.

Passage B, however, in presents a somewhat flawed interpretation of the rebellion of 1857, stating that there was "something of a national character" in both those who opposed the rebellion as well as in those of those who supported". This overstates the extent to which the events can be described as nationalist, as it was much less a product of anti-Britishness and a sporadic uprising with ~~some~~ those ~~even~~ opposing lacking the 'national character' that Keay speaks of. The state of Punjab was annexed in 1849 and thus did not rebel at all, with a university being established in Punjab by the British. A number of states like Punjab

were benefitting from British rule and so lacked the sense of nationalism and instead displayed loyalty to the British. Furthermore, Keay understates the extent to which "the rights and wrongs of

British rule" played a role, by describing it as "not always a decisive factor". This fails to recognise that it was British actions that led the Sepays to rebel, with annexation of land and underpayment of soldiers all feeding into the rebellion. It fails to recognise that the rebellion was a reaction to British rule, and not just a "nationalist movement", as if it weren't for British rule, both its "rights and wrongs", the rebellion may never have been sparked in India. Overall, passage B presents the least convincing view by minimising the ~~real~~ 'realist' nature of the rebellion and by overstating the nationalist nature of it.

However, passage B is not without any merit, as it does recognise that the event was a "watershed" moment, with it showing the British that the current system of rule would not work, culminating in the 1858 Government of India Act, establishing the British Raj, a demonstration of the highly influential nature of the rebellion. It also recognises that the rebellion did have some level of

unity, with "Muslim and Hindu" sepoys joining together to fight against the use of pig and cow fat to grease enfield rifles,

seen in the fact that on the 24th April 1857, among 90 sepoys at a military march, all but 6 refused their rifles on religious grounds. However, the strength of the interpretation only go to further highlight the limitations of it, as it was in fact the "wrongs of British rule" that pushed some Muslims and Hindus to rebel, and the ~~on~~ two sides were inspired by religion, not a sense of nationalism, seen in the Chant of "deen, deen", meaning 'faith' in Arabic, by the Muslim soldiers. Therefore, overall, Passage B may ~~be~~ have some merit, but this fails to be outweighed by the limitation of the interpretation.

In conclusion, when assessing the nature of the events of 1857, passage A presents the much more convincing explanation, recognising it as a ~~was~~ largely divided rebellion without strong leadership. Wolpert recognises the nuances in the rebellion and that it was not a rebellion of unity against the British but rather a collection of Indians with various grievances. Passage B, on the other hand, conflates the nationalist elements of the rebellion and poses a rather simplistic view ~~that the rebellion was~~

		<p>an rebellion of independence against of the rebellion. Therefore, it becomes clear that passage A presents the much more Government view as an explanation of the nature of ^{the} events of 1857.</p>
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Question 2

2* To what extent did the reasons for the growth of the British Empire change in the period 1857–1965? [25]

This was a popular question. Candidates were able to identify reasons for growth and evaluate the level of change across the whole period.

At the top end, candidates selected three themes and assessed three or four examples in each paragraph from across the time period, evaluating the level of change across the reasons for growth. Successful candidates focused on the phrase “growth” and assessed in relation to this. Answers in the top level contained interim assessments (or judgements) before writing a developed conclusion.

At the lower end of the mark range candidates approached their answer either:

A - chronologically

or

B – were unable to compare events thematically

Exemplar 2 was marked in Level 6

Exemplar 2

2	<p>From 1857 to 1965, the reasons for the growth of empire largely stayed consistent, with economic considerations playing the largest and most influential role across the period. Strategic considerations were also quite influential, but the its impact on the growth of empire largely waned across the period towards the end of the period, along with international influence also losing influence over time. Overall, it is true to argue that economic considerations stayed consistently at the heart of growth of empire, thus demonstrating some sense of continuity.</p>
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When assessing the impact of economic considerations, it becomes clear that the growth of empire was consistently pushed by want for profit. Scholar J. A. Hobson argues this, stating that the growth of empire was a product of the ~~growth of~~ greed of private financiers, a notion supported by Lenin, who also argues that

capitalist greed pushed empire to grow. This is clearly seen in the Second Opium War ~~(1856-1860)~~ (1856-1860), whereby Britain's sphere of influence grew as a result of a war to push the Chinese to open up trade of Opium, so that the excess product being produced in India could be sold. This war resulted in the 1860 Treaty of Tientsin, whereby the British were given 5 trading ports, along with the city of Hong Kong. Whilst minimal in terms of land growth, this was a substantial growth in terms of influence, with British product now being freely sold in Chinese markets, despite resistance from the Chinese, a demonstration of economic causes of growth. This economic drive for growth was mirrored in Africa, whereby raw materials such as timber, gold and diamonds pushed annexation of land, for example Nigeria in 1888, and Uganda in 1888. The economic drive in Africa is also visible in the Second Boer War (1899-1902) whereby the discovery of diamonds in

Transvaal led to British annexation of more land in South Africa. This shows that the British were largely pushed to expand as a result of economic reasons, with resources and markets being key reasons to take over

new land. The pattern of economic considerations during growth was similar to post WW1, with the protectorate of Transvaal (1920) acting as a means for Britain to gain influence over oil in the region. Overall, it is clear that the economic reasons for growth of empire consistently stayed at the heart of the British, with it playing a ~~major~~ role across empire, stretching from Asia to Africa to the Middle East, as well as across the period, thus showing that the reasons for growth did not change.

Another reason for the growth of Empire was strategic aims of the British, which changed somewhat over time, losing its influence. In the days of new imperialism, strategic aims played a larger ~~major~~ role, with the taking of ~~the~~ Egypt as a protectorate ~~in 1882~~ in 1882 showing this. As Disraeli had purchased 4 million in shares of the Canal in 1875, Britain needed to protect its influence in the region, and so set up a ~~new~~ ~~veiled~~ protectorate as a means of doing so. The Suez Canal was of strategic value

because of the fact that it shortened the journey to India from 6 months to 6 weeks, providing the British a means of

accessing already existing ~~land~~ areas much easier, ~~and~~ therefore ~~showing~~ that Empire grew due to strategic reasons. We can also see that the importance of strategic aims persisted somewhat, with the protectorate of Palestine (1920) acting as a means of reducing Ottoman influence in the middle east, a ~~region~~ region of value now, due to the acquisition of Egypt into the Empire. This shows that there was perhaps some level of consistency, with the British keenly to protect their valuable areas of influence and thus grant Empire strategically to do so. However, this factor did not persist in its influence, with the grant of nationalist movements meaning that Empire was slowly decreasing in size and thus there were fewer areas of value to grant to protect. With India gaining independence in 1947, it became increasingly difficult to justify the grant of Empire for strategic aims, as it was not viable with fewer places to protect. Overall, the strategic aims of the British did bring about a significant amount of grants ~~from~~ in the early period, but the influence of this

waned, this shows that there was a change in the reasons for grants of Empire

from 1857 to 1965.

When assessing the growth of Empire as a ~~major~~ result of international influence, it becomes clear that not only was there a level of ~~activity~~ ^{change}. The Berlin Conference (1884-5) was a result of growing ~~international~~ international influence world wide, particularly from Germany, and thus the influence of the likes of Bismarck in his annexation of new land in the South and ~~East~~ ^{East} of Africa led to British annexation of new land. This is visible in the Imperial East Africa Company gaining a key parcel in 1886, and ~~then~~ British Somaliland becoming a protectorate in 1888. This shows that growth was a result of international influence particularly in the early days of new imperialism. As time progressed, however, the impact of international influence in the growth of Empire waned, with Germany becoming much weaker following WWI, due to the Treaty of Versailles (1919). However, Britain also absorbed some German imperial lands, for example Tanganyika as a result of this Treaty, ~~which~~ but this was the extent of the impact. There was a clear shift in the impact of international

2		<p>influence, with the likes of Russia now embroiled in their own issues following a revolution in 1917, and Germany significantly weakened, thus allowing that Empire was no longer significantly pushed to to grow by international rivalry. Overall, therefore, there was a change in the reasons for growth of Empire.</p>
		<p>In conclusion, the reasons for the growth of Empire did see the level ^{change} of continuity from 1857 to 1965, with the strategic and international influence taking their impact. However, economic reasons consistently remained</p>

		<p>at the heart of the growth of Empire, and as it was the most important reason, it is true to say that there was a small degree of continuity in the reasons for the growth of Empire.</p>
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Question 3

- 3* 'Opposition to British colonial rule was more violent in Asia than Africa between 1857 and 1965.'
How far do you agree? [25]

This was the least popular question and there were few responses that reached the top levels. Candidates that did reach the top levels assessed thematically the nature of opposition, comparing it in both Asia and Africa before coming to a sustained judgement. Some answered the question geographically (country by country) before producing a measured conclusion.

At the lower end of the mark range, candidates often dealt with the regions as a whole and were unable to compare either geographically or by time period.

Question 4

- 4* 'The British Empire always had a negative impact on international relations during the period from 1857 to 1965.' How far do you agree? [25]

This was a popular question. Candidates were able to identify themes and evaluate the level of negative impact across the whole period.

At the top end, candidates selected three countries and assessed three or four examples from across the time period in each paragraph, evaluating the level of impact. Successful candidates focused on the phrase "always had" and assessed in relation to this. Answers in the top level contained interim assessments (or judgements) before writing a developed conclusion.

At the lower end of the mark range candidates approached their answer either:

A - chronologically

or

B – were unable to compare examples across the time frame within thematic paragraphs.

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