

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY A**

**H505**

For first teaching in 2015

**Y319/01 Summer 2022 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 answers are 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.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

### Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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## Paper Y319/01 series overview

Y319 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 responses will test a hypothesis and reach a supported judgement.

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

## Section A

### 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 impact of the 'Gilded Age' on the position of women. [30]

Candidates engaged well with the overall view of the two passages, with the passages being handled equally well. Some own knowledge was used effectively to evaluate the different interpretations, although many candidates did use the information from the other passage to evaluate as though it were own knowledge.

When it came to Passage A, the majority of candidates picked up on the narrow focus of the question with regard to white, unmarried women. For both passages, a significant minority of candidates worked their way through the interpretations explaining the different claims, asserting their validity without calling on own knowledge in support. Many candidates identified the limited nature of both passages in their focus on the economic impact of the Gilded Age, citing a good range of detailed own knowledge on other ways in which the period impacted on women.

There were some very good conclusions at the top end which weighed up the relative merits of each passage. At lower levels these arguments lacked support.

Exemplar 1 shows a Level 6 response.

## Exemplar 1

1		<p>During the Gilded Age (c. 1870-1890) America saw a period of mass economic and industrial expansion which resulted in a high demand for workers and greater urbanisation while the population grew. This had both positive and negative effects for the position of women, both the lower and more educated classes. Passage A however arguably provides a more convincing explanation of the impacts of the Gilded Age on women since it adequately summarises the positive gains for women workers during this period - especially in considering the expansion in white collar work. Though Passage B does validly point out the more negative side of the impacts, it arguably depicts this in a disproportionate way and fails to also consider the positive change for women's position during this period.</p>
		<p>Passage A clearly asserts that women had greater opportunities for work in industry as a direct result of the economic expansion characteristic of the Gilded Age. This was especially true within the textiles industry, where women workers were actually often preferred to male workers since they worked for lower wages - and given that employers were keen to gain maximum profits, this made them more desirable. Although, as passage B shows, this did result in the exclusion of women from many unions, it did mean that the proportion of women in work expanded by</p>

more than 60%, destigmatising women as workers and changing social expectations to a degree. Though this change was limited, it was nevertheless a positive impact of the Gilded Age:

Women also had more work opportunities since, by the early 1900s, states had been progressively preventing the employment of children, giving more employment opportunities for women who worked for similarly low wages.

Passage A also expresses that there was an increase in the number of married women in work; indeed, between 1865 and 1885 the percentage of women workers who were married had risen from around 8% to 23% - again showing the growing destigmatisation of women in work - especially married women; whom it was primarily believed ought to be homekeepers. With that said however, as the source does imply - though perhaps not as strongly as would reflect the time - the ultimate prevailing attitude was still that a woman's primary role was in the home: one might even argue that women faced harder lives during the Gilded Age in this respect, since they were expected to balance (often harsh) days of factory work with caring for their children and homes. There was no childcare or relief available and so, although more married women were working, it did not necessarily improve their position - as the source

does not explicitly state this, it does not provide a completely convincing explanation.

However passage A provides a far ~~better~~ more accurate account of the impacts of the Gilded Age for the more educated women who were able to hugely expand their opportunities as a result of the growing mechanisation and discoveries of the Gilded Age. With the invention of the typewriter (see Passage A points out) ~~was~~ in 1878 and for example the telephone, high-school graduates were able to enter clerical professions on a much larger scale, so that by 1900 ~~more~~ over 40% of women workers were in clerical / white collar jobs with around 18% in domestic service and factory work. As well as this, in 1873 the first nursing school was set up, with 35 emerging nationally over the end of the century. This shows that for those with higher education, more skilled work was becoming more widely available; ~~as~~ this is in part due to the higher demand for eg. nurses and teachers ~~since~~ given the expansion in population (partially since 14 million immigrants came to the US by 1900) because of the Gilded Age.

Passage B however, focuses entirely on working-class women in the Gilded Age: it states that - because of migrant labour - urbanisation resulted in a growth in harsh conditions and exploitation. For women, this often materialised in prostitution (which many preferred



to the harsh conditions of sweatshops). Passage B correctly identifies this and with respect to the growing migration to the cities - especially ~~with~~ by African Americans and other minorities seeking better employment and the Federal Government's laissez-faire attitude to protecting workers - women in particular suffered from exploitation. Passage B does thus provide a better summary of city life for poor women - especially as a result of the immigration characteristic of the Gilded Age; but since it does not express the positive opportunities for educated women - whose graduate rates were increasing, even for African American women - it does not give a full overview.

Passage B also considers the representation of women in trade unions - stating that the Gilded Age had an almost entirely negative impact in this respect. Arguably however, while women certainly were excluded from the AFL after its founding in 1886 by Samuel Gompers, before this, they had been able to join the Knights of Labour. In 1881, the KOL had begun admitting female members, with a growth in female membership to 50 000 by the mid-80s with 113 women's assemblies. Although the KOL went into decline after the '86 Haymarket Affair, it had encouraged women workers to protest, and prominent women like Mary Harris ("Mother") Jones arose - who was responsible for persistent protests and organisations aiming to help

miners and co-organised the March of factory children. Significantly, she was one founding member of the Industrial Workers of the World in 1905, which also encouraged female members. ~~At~~ The Gilded Age sees women take unionism into their own hands after exclusion with the founding of the National Women's Trade Union League in 1903. Therefore on many occasions, even despite the AFL's restrictions, the Gilded Age and its expansion of women-workers and industry resulted in the emergence of significant working-class individuals and women keen to protest for themselves.

Overall therefore Passage B does correctly point out some negative impacts for urban women and does suggest the discrimination against women in work and in unions, however it dismisses the significant changes which were positive even for working women - and more importantly for more educated women - which Passage A expresses. Thus Passage A provides a more convincing explanation.

## Section B

### Question 2\*

- 2\* How important was the role of African Americans in gaining African American civil rights in the period from 1865 to 1992? [25]

This was the most popular of the themes questions, but also the least well answered and the question which provided the least differentiation. Candidates provided a very good range of knowledge, and the vast majority were able to discuss – in detail – the actions of African American leaders and groups and the impact that they had on civil rights.

There were far fewer responses than in previous years which confined their discussion to the 1960s, and most did discuss the whole period, choosing to compare the actions of AAs against the Federal Government and the Supreme Court (even though this wasn't required). Candidates struggled to move their discussion beyond this, however, and while continuity/change was noted, this very rarely evolved into a developed and comparative discussion meaning that most responses ended up in Level 4.

There was a roughly even split between candidates who adopted a thematic approach and those who chose to discuss different groups/contributions in turn, with both approaches achieving similar results due to the difficulties candidates faced in achieving synthesis. As seems to be the case with AA questions, there were a large number of responses which provided a list of AA leaders and their contributions.

### Question 3\*

- 3\* 'The actions of the American Indian Movement of the 1960s and 1970s did more to advance the civil rights of the Native Americans than any other factor during the period from 1865 to 1992.' How far do you agree? [25]

This was the least popular question, but did produce a number of very good responses. Candidates did, however, struggle with the narrow focus on AIM, with a number talking generally about developments in the 1960s/70s such as court cases (more attributable to NARF) and the policies of the Nixon/Ford administrations, and some failing to give any relevant knowledge.

Comparisons were better than in Question 2, however, with most choosing to compare the actions of AIM to those of the Federal Government.

A notable number of responses did not move their discussion beyond the 1970s. There was a roughly even split between candidates who adopted a thematic approach (focused on the different types of rights) and one that considered different factors, with the former tending to perform better.

## Question 4\*

4\* 'Developments in the 1960s had more impact on gender equality in the USA than developments that occurred in any other period from 1865 to 1992.' How far do you agree? [25]

Candidates generally had very good knowledge of the developments of the 1960s and were able to compare this effectively to trends elsewhere. Some struggled with the idea of 'period' within the questions, falling back on pre-prepared responses instead, but this was a minority. A significant minority, however, did not move their discussion beyond the 19th amendment, limiting themselves to the 1920s-1970s, despite Question 1's focus on the Gilded Age.

It was a common misconception to place *Roe v Wade* in the 1960s and to think that the ERA has been ratified. Some responses also conflated contraception and abortion when talking about reproductive rights - several candidates mistakenly believed that Margaret Sanger ran abortion clinics. Candidates were again roughly evenly split between a thematic approach (discussing different types of rights) and one which focused on different periods in turn – the former tended to be more highly rewarded.

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