

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY A**

**H505**

For first teaching in 2015

**Y316/01 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 is 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

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## Paper Y316/01 series overview

Y316 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 leadership and tactics of O'Connell in the 1820s. **[30]**

Most candidates were able to understand the contrasting views in the two passages on the leadership and tactics of O'Connell in the 1820s but also see that there were many similarities between them. In light of this, responses were credited that argued that both passages had convincing arguments to make about O'Connell's role and could be seen as complementary rather than contrasting.

Stronger responses used own knowledge effectively to both corroborate and challenge the arguments in both passages. Weaker responses either just described the content of each passage or explained them with little evaluation of them. Some took the reference to Wolf Tone's rebellion in Passage B as an excuse to describe the events of 1798 at length while others did not take note of the reference to the 1820s in the question and spoke at length about O'Connell's later Repeal campaign.

Exemplar 1 is a good example of a Level 6 response to this question.

## Exemplar 1

Interpretation:

Passage A emphasises O'Connell's political astuteness and evident leadership, restraining more radical "agrarian societies" to ~~lead~~ <sup>maintain unity</sup> and lead a purely issue-based campaign focused on the betterment of "wages, regular employment and lower rents."

In this, the author presents O'Connell as a strong organiser who strategically used constitutional means to advance the Emancipation cause. In contrast, Passage B, while acknowledging the pragmatic 'evidence' of "militarised organisation", also emphasises O'Connell's skill in appealing to "symbols of old radicalism" by championing religious and economic concerns. In this, Passage A presents O'Connell as a strictly constitutional politician, while Passage B recognises O'Connell's skill as an agitator through his Birminghamite.

Passage A, in emphasising O'Connell's leadership and tactics as the leader of a "modern" and formal organisation, is ~~correct~~ <sup>convincing</sup> in several ways. For example, the claim that O'Connell worked to "concentrate attention solely upon emancipation" is substantiated by his strong disavowal of physical force politics and hesitancy to champion radical agrarian reform.

personally arguing that ~~the~~ violent resistance would invite coercive measures and fracture the movement. This, in turn, supports the interpretation's claim that O'Connell's tactics relied on a uniquely 'catholic element', championing social conservatism to win over the clergy and ~~the~~ middle class. Furthermore, this is reinforced by the power of the Catholic Church as a social institution, on which O'Connell relied heavily alongside his own rhetoric, to disseminate the reform agenda and 'indure the deeper passions of his followers' by presenting the cause as a religious call to arms. In this, the interpretation is made more convincing.

However, in terms of O'Connell and the association's tactics going into 1828, the interpretation is limited, taking an individualistic focus which prioritises the leader's personal oratory and campaigning talent, and neglecting ~~his~~ his pragmatic adaptation of political circumstances and governmental weakness. For example, though the interpretation mentions O'Connell's "dramatic exaggeration" as an orator, it neglects his practical implementation of this going into the County Clare election, using ~~the~~ Vesey-Fitzgerald's reelection as an opportunity to test the government's

resolve. In this, the interpretation is made less convincing downplaying the leader's greatest strength - his reputation and ability to capitalise on Tory weakness after the death of the pro-Emancipation George Canning, a development which might have otherwise undermined the Catholic Association. In addition, though the interpretation focuses on O'Connell's use of "association funds" and "religious ceremonies" to lead a mass movement, it downplays his tactics in relation to the Irish peasantry and his ability to bridge the gap between "mass politics" and Emancipation <sup>based on</sup> ~~through~~ <sup>by appealing</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>to</sup> latent resentment <sup>after</sup> George III's vetoing of Emancipation and the fall of Pitt. As a result, though the interpretation is a convincing analysis of O'Connell's leadership, it is undermined by its omission of O'Connell's appeals to economic anxiety and obsession of government weakness - <sup>trying</sup> to fully explain the leader's tactics.

In comparison, passage B places this appeal to 'mass politics' and economic concerns front and centre, emphasising the importance of this in "allowing tenants to follow their priests rather than their landlords". This is a very convincing explanation, combining O'Connell's



		Economic and religious <del>issue</del> <sup>in a coherent</sup>
		analysis of the leader's strategy. This is
		in turn supported by the innovative use of
		mass fundraising, centred around the Irish
		church <del>and</del> through the so-called Catholic rent,
		as well as the Catholic Association's one penny
		membership fee, which made it inclusive to the
		poor. In this, the interpretation's claim
		that a "militarily disciplined and centralised extra-
		parliamentary movement persisted" is substantiated,
		placing organisation and moral re-education at the
		centre of O'Connell's strategy. Furthermore,
		the interpretation is made more convincing in
		its reference to the leader's "electoral demonstrations"
		(such as the County Clare Election) in "breaking
		down long resistance to Emancipation." In this,
		it <sup>there</sup> combines its analysis of the campaign
		as a mass movement predicated economic conditions
		with the wider political context within the
		union, and is supported by the weakness of
		the Wellington ministry and the support for
		Emancipation among the Whigs. As a result,
		the interpretation is made more convincing, illustrating
		O'Connell's tactics as a pragmatic capitalist, utilising
		the existing momentum towards Emancipation to his
		advantage.
		However, this interpretation is undermined by <sup>its</sup> <del>the</del>
		focus on economic issues, which, while a

motivating factor for supporters, was never the centre of the campaign due to O'Connell's oppositional aversion to economic or agrarian radicalism. For example, though the intertextual references collateral factors such as 'priests' influence on a parish level, it reflects the ~~influence~~ <sup>impact</sup> of the national Catholic Church's endorsement of O'Connell, the powerful <sup>institutional</sup> network he afforded to the campaign, as well as the legitimisation of the ~~cause~~ <sup>cause</sup> in the eyes of the Catholic majority. In this, though the intertextual cite's O'Connell's "heroic" as a powerful weapon in the campaign, it omits the religious driving force behind his words, which allowed him to appeal to the concerns and grievances of the disenfranchised Catholic majority. This element, which might otherwise make the ~~intertextual~~ more convincing, damages its credibility as an evaluation of O'Connell's skill as a popular religious leader.

Overall however, Passage B is the more convincing ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> explanation of O'Connell's leadership and tactics, as its downplaying of cultural issues is a less fundamental flaw than Passage A's omission of class and economic anxiety. In emphasising O'Connell's ability to break the Tory resistance to Emancipation, it ~~also~~ <sup>also</sup> understands O'Connell's significance as a mass leader and the importance of the Catholic Association as

		<p>an early political pressure group. Furthermore, while <del>Passage A</del> focuses heavily on O'Connell's skill as a practical organiser, this is equally detrimental to its explanation of the association's tactics, neglecting the watershed moment that was the County Clare Election. Therefore, due to its combination of "electoral politics", mass demonstrations and the leader's ability to offset hierarchical tenant-landowner relations, <del>in the</del> <del>passage</del> <del>B</del> is the more convincing explanation of O'Connell's tactics and leadership.</p>

## Section B

### Question 2\*

**2\*** How important was cultural nationalism as a force for opposition to the Union in the years 1791 to 1921? **[25]**

This was a popular question and there were some very impressive responses with a good understanding of the role of cultural nationalism in opposition to the union over the whole period.

A few candidates decided to focus on cultural nationalism itself which could produce some excellent work. Most however compared it to constitutional and revolutionary nationalism and many judged them to be more important overall.

Weaker responses simply described different forms of nationalism and were frequently over focused on the Gaelic revival and the Easter Rising. Even the better candidates who achieved good synthesis were reluctant to write much about the early period and some were too reliant on the details in the passages for Question 1 in their discussion of the role of O'Connell.

### Question 3\*

**3\*** 'The Whigs and Liberals consistently supported the union throughout the period from 1791 to 1921.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

There were some very good focused responses to this question which usually supported the thesis in the question until the Lloyd George Liberal coalition government accepted independence for the Republic of Ireland at the end of the period.

Some candidates looked at themes such as religious, economic and political union and through this approach were able to establish effective synthesis. However, there was also some confusion over Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule with many arguing that this meant the end to the union rather than a significant change to its terms. There were also a significant minority of responses that wanted to compare the Whigs and Liberals to the Conservatives and therefore large parts of their essays were not directly focused on the question.

## Question 4\*

- 4\* 'Land issues were the main cause of economic concerns for Irish nationalists in the period from 1791 to 1921.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

This was the least popular essay question but there were many strong responses. Most agreed with the thesis in the question, at least until the early twentieth century, but there were also good arguments for the famine and the contrast between the industrialised north and rural south and west as important economic concerns. Land issues were well understood overall to include both land ownership and the dominance of the Protestant Ascendancy but also land use and the frequency of famines. However weaker responses often tended to describe the events of the 1845 famine at length and sometimes strayed into discussions of religious and political concerns without linking them to the economy.

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