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A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y306/01 Summer 2022 series

Version 1

Contents

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

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 Y306/01 series overview

Y306 is one of twenty one units for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This unit 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.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
• showed a clear understanding of the views of the two interpretations in relation to the question • used contextual knowledge to test the interpretations, linking that knowledge directly to the interpretation through evaluative words • considered 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.	• showed a limited understanding of one or both 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.

Section A overview

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.

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 threat posed by the Pilgrimage of Grace to the government.

[30]

There were many good responses to this question. It is important that candidates take a holistic view of each passage – what is the view of each passage about the issue in the question and don't simply go through it line by line. Candidates were able to access both interpretations and saw the contrast in the overall views offered by the two passages. There was a considerable amount of contextual knowledge that they were able to use to evaluate the interpretations with many using their knowledge of the size of the Pilgrim rebel force to support the view in A and were also able to compare it with the scale of other risings in order to argue that A was correct in arguing it was a threat. This was often added to by candidates commenting about the seizure of Pontefract castle, negotiations at the River Don and the organisation of the hosts. There were further comments about the demands and how the call to reinstate Mary and for religious changes appeared to threaten Henry's regime. However, the weakest element concerned the arming of the rebel army – many candidates seemed unaware that many rebels would be well armed and experienced from their involvement in border warfare with the Scots.

In comparison, candidates were also able to evaluate Interpretation B by considering the aims, arguing that the Pilgrim oath showed that they were not a threat and that the lack of movement south further reinforced this view. There were also comments about it being an attack on Henry's ministers, particularly Cromwell, Cranmer and Rich, with some referencing the Pilgrims Ballad to support this.

Exemplar 1 provides a paragraph from a strong response marked in Level 6; it evaluates Passage A and uses contextual knowledge well. The knowledge is closely linked to the passage to support the view and the response shows good use of evaluative words to underline the strength of the interpretation.

Assessment for learning

Make sure candidates take an overview of the two passages. What is the main view of each passage about the issue in the question?

Exemplar 1

Passage A starts its argument by saying the "size of the force" raised for the Pilgrimage in relation to the royal troops made it a significant threat to the government. This is a convincing viewpoint as there were as many as 40,000 rebels gathered at Pontefract castle compared to only 8,000 royal troops assembled under the Duke of Norfolk. This made it a significant threat as the Pilgrims had the military advantage, at least in regards to number, which provides convincing evidence for passage A's argument. Furthermore, the passage continues to argue that the "size of the rebel host" compared to other rebellion shows how much of a threat it posed to the government. The Pilgrimage of Grace was the largest Tudor rebellion and also had the most disparate range of support, with the nobility, gentry and commons all supporting the rebellion. The noble support, such as from Lord Darcy, provided the rebels with legitimacy and the number of commons swelled the rebellions ranks, which increased its threat to the government. However, in regards to being the most threatening passage A is somewhat less convincing. It's location in the north removed it from central government, which reduced the threat it posed. In this sense the Amicable Grant of 1525 was far

more threatening and was ultimately successful. Moreover, the passages argument that the rebels were "experienced warriors" is unconvincing. Apart from Lord Darcy, who had fought in a North African crusade in 1511, there's no evidence to suggest the Pilgrim's had military experience. Therefore, passage A's argument that the scale of the rising made it a significant threat is convincing but it's argument that it was the most threatening rebellion, in particular due to their military skills, is unconvincing.

Section B overview

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 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.

Question 2*

2* 'Tudor rebellions in England during the period from 1485 to 1603, failed mainly because of a lack of support.' How far do you agree?   **[25]**

This was a popular question and although many offered a range of reasons why rebellions largely failed, they were often less convincing in their line of argument. Many responses commented on the failings of rebellions with small numbers, such as the Oxfordshire or Essex rising or some of the dynastic rebellions. However many did not also notice that rebellions with large numbers often failed as well; they could have used examples such as the Pilgrimage of Grace, Kett's rebellion or the Cornish Tax rebellion and this would have provided plenty of opportunity for synthesis and therefore access to the higher levels.

Candidates did consider a range of reasons to explain failure with many considering the aims of rebellions, arguing that dynastic rebellions had to be defeated whereas taxation or other socio-economic rebellions could see concessions being made, again providing an ideal opportunity for comparison and synthesis. Responses also focused on the issue of leadership, where again candidates often noted that even good leadership, as in the case of Aske, did not bring success but poor leadership as in the case of the Northern Earls or even Kett and Wyatt could contribute to failure. There were also discussions of the government response, which many considered to be the most important factor, particularly when force was used, and also of location, although candidates were often unsure whether distance from the capital explained why a rebellion failed.

Exemplar 2 is taken from a response that was awarded full marks. It shows a very high level of synthesis, which was sustained throughout the response. Direct comparisons were made and, most impressively the range was excellent; the candidate provided enough detail to make the comparison effective – they did not just assert that the rebellions were similar or different but showed in what way.

Exemplar 2

Many rebellions throughout the period, particularly dynastic or succession revolts, garnered little support. This was due to their very nature as they often acquired noble backing but attracted little support from the commons, who had no interest in a change in regime. The Lovell & Stafford revolt of 1486, Northumberland's rebellion in 1553 and Essex's revolt in 1601 were all poorly supported with Northumberland's 2,000 troops deserting and Essex only managing to gain a few hundred supporters. As a result all were swiftly defeated and this was a key reason in their failure. Other dynastic revolts, particularly the Yorkist rebellions in Henry VII's reign, managed to gain a few thousand supporters. Lambert Simnel had an army of 4,000 at East Stoke in 1487 and Warbeck attracted support from various European courts. Yet in both cases neither had much domestic support with only a few hundred Cornish backing Warbeck in 1497 and most of Simnel's army were foreign mercenaries. Admittedly Warbeck was defeated much more easily, as Henry VII had to defeat Simnel in battle, yet had more commons joined Simnel then the rebellion could have been successful. So, throughout the period dynastic and succession rebellions consistently failed due to a lack of domestic support, although Simnel's foreign support meant he had to be defeated as a result of government action. Yet other rebellions were more well-supported. Tax and religious rebellions always gained the most support; the Cornish in 1497 had as many as 15,000 rebels, there were 40,000 Pilgrims at Pontefract and 16,000 rebels gathered under Kett in 1549. But

none of these rebellions were successful either, despite both the Pilgrimy and Kett's rebels ~~outnut~~ outnumbering royalist troops. This therefore suggests that, whilst some rebellions could fail due to a lack of support, most had to be defeated due to government action. In fact, the government's ~~acti~~ action often determined which rebellion could be successful, as they gave in to none of the Pilgrimy religious demands but in 1497 they dropped the cornish tax. So, government response was a more important factor in a rebellion failure.

Question 3*

3* 'Elizabeth I dealt more effectively with the problem of rebellion than any other Tudor monarch during the period from 1485 to 1603.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

This question was answered by a good number of candidates, although some struggled with the term 'effective' and did not focus sufficiently on it. There were also a number of responses that went through the Tudor period monarch by monarch and therefore found it impossible to demonstrate the key skill of synthesis, limiting themselves to at best a Level 4 response.

Many did argue that Elizabeth was effective as unrest was crushed easily and the numbers who rose in rebellion was limited. Stronger responses noted that Elizabeth was far less effective when it came to dealing with unrest in Ireland. They noted that Tyrone's rebellion cost a great deal, won Spanish support and was only coming to an end when she died.

Those who adopted a thematic approach produced stronger responses, often considering issues such as the use of spies, which allowed a comparison between Henry VII and Elizabeth, or the use of government policies to end or even prevent unrest. Candidates also discussed issues such as gaining information, often comparing the problem of Henry VIII during the Pilgrimage with Edward VI and the Western rebellion.

There were some interesting comments about the context in which unrest took place, some arguing Henry VII was effective given his weak position, particularly at the start of his reign. Others suggested that Edward VI, because of the sheer number of rebellions or Mary in actually taking the throne back and then defeating Wyatt were particularly effective. Clear evidence of no set response is required.

Question 4*

4* 'Local authorities were more important than central authorities in the maintenance of political stability in the period from 1485 to 1603.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

This question drew a good number of responses but was probably done less well than the other questions. Candidates found it much harder to make comparisons, often simply just explaining the role of various authorities in maintaining order. Candidates also found it much easier to write about the role of central authorities than local. The former saw the role of the monarchy, Council and parliament discussed.

There was considerable discussion of propaganda, but how effective this was and its impact on the population as a whole was not given consideration. In discussing local authorities many focused almost exclusively on JPs, although some did mention regional councils and Lord Lieutenants.

There was some mention of the Church, but candidates seemed unsure of whether this was local or central and then seemed uncertain how to explain their role and impact. Nobility were often discussed, but again candidates were uncertain under which heading this should go. However, there were some responses where candidates did argue that both the clergy and nobility undermined stability rather than maintained it. There was little knowledge of the role of the 'middling sort' despite their increasing role in the implementation of the Poor Law.

Assessment for learning

Discussion of the role of local authorities in the maintenance of order and stability needs to be given greater emphasis.

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