

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y206/01 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

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 Y206/01 series overview

Y206 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. 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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short-answer essay • reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important • linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question • in answering the essay question, discussed at least two issues in depth • gave supporting detail that was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic • reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question • made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way • produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response • were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question • showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay • were unable to support their response with relevant or accurate material • did not focus on the precise wording of the question • made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

Question 1 (a)

1 (a) Which of the following benefitted most from the work of the Inquisition?

- (i) The Crown
- (ii) The Church

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

Most candidates were able to offer some explanation as to the gains made by both institutions. In dealing with the Crown the most common comment was that the Inquisition was the one institution that united Castile and Aragon. There were also comments about the financial gains from the lands that were confiscated, although some argued that the Crown was hit by the detrimental impact to the economy and finances by the expulsions.

In considering the benefits for the Church most responses discussed how the problem of the Moriscos and Conversos was solved and how the Inquisition helped to enforce authority in Grenada following the conquest. However, many responses were quite general and lacked specific knowledge or were better on one element than the other. It is vital that both elements of the question are considered and equal weight is given to both before a judgement is reached.

Question 1 (b*)

(b)* How successfully did Isabella and Ferdinand manage finances in the period from 1479 to 1516?

[20]

There were some very strong responses to this question with some candidates showing a very good depth of knowledge about the taxes, how much was raised by them and the extent to which Ferdinand and Isabella were able to increase their revenue. There was also some discussion of the reforms that were carried out in order to ensure greater efficiency and how far these developments were essential given the rising expenditure. Candidates were able to see the limits to their success, often commenting on the tax exemptions of the nobles and the rising cost of war. There was also some consideration given in the stronger responses on the increasing reliance on loans and the problems this created in the longer term, with some aware that interest payments on juros consumed a third of ordinary income. However, some candidates struggled to support their comments with precise examples and showed little understanding of the different types of taxation. There was often too much focus on the incoming silver from the New World, which at this point was limited and on economic issues such as trade and the Mesta. It is important that candidates at A Level are able to differentiate between finance and the economy and focus on the demands of the question.

Exemplar 1 is an extract which shows where drift from the focus occurred and while the information may not be wrong it will not score highly. The response was marked in Level 3.

Misconception



Candidates need to be aware the finance and the economy are not the same and they need to be able to differentiate.

Exemplar 1

		<p>The Mesta was also a fault and a benefit in Isabella and Ferdinand's financial management. They granted the finest grazing land to the Mesta and collected high tax amounts - the Servicio was an increase in income and advantaged the crown financially.</p>
		<p>However, the Mesta presented an issue as the grazing land given to the sheep was no longer accessible to the farming industry, which created an increase in the exports of food and agriculture, which increased the spending of Royal finances.</p>
		<p>The weather also effected the economy as it prevented the growth in agriculture, the harsh winters and hot summers made it difficult to grow crops. Eventually, peasants were encouraged to grow their own crops and sell for free to boost agriculture.</p>

Question 2 (a)

2 (a) Which of the following was of greater importance in the rule of Castile during the reign of Isabella and Ferdinand?

(i) The Corregidores

(ii) The nobility

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

The strongest responses showed a detailed knowledge of both elements, whereas weaker responses were more general in their approach and lacked specific examples to support their points.

In discussing the Corregidores most were aware of their general role in towns and were able to comment on this and the impact of their increasing numbers. The better responses had specific examples of their impact in specific towns and regions, which added to the strength of the argument. Similarly, in discussing (ii), some candidates gave specific examples of nobility to illustrate their importance. Many considered the issue of tax exemption or their power through their castles and retainers. Some argued that they were of greater importance as Ferdinand and Isabella were forced to make concessions to them, whereas they had greater control over the appointment of Corregidores.

Exemplar 2 provides an example of a well-developed response which reaches a judgement as to the importance, showing the depth that is needed to score well.

Exemplar 2

2	a	<p>The rule of Castile during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella greatly utilised both the nobility and Corregidores, however the use of Corregidores was limited by corruption and rejection to its use, and therefore was limited in its importance in the rule. Therefore ultimately, the nobility were more important to the reign.</p>
		<p>The nobility were of greater importance to the reign of Isabella and Ferdinand as due to their power and social hold of power and social control, relations with them were vital in assuring the monarch's stability and assertion of royal authority. Their importance can be seen most evidently through the monarch's efforts to pacify them. In succeeding the throne, noble families were granted amnesty and land to confirm their support, and great efforts were made to gain support from families such as the Mendoza family. This evidences how the monarchs viewed their importance in gaining the throne. Throughout their reign, Isabella and Ferdinand also granted them important positions throughout Castile to pacify them. For example, the Count of Tendilla was granted the title of governor of Granada.</p>

and viceroy of Andalusia. The monarchs were greatly aware of their role in the social order and thus looked to appease them and acknowledge their power so in turn the nobility would acknowledge and respect royal power. This is further evident in seeing how nobles escaped the normal ~~exec~~ jurisdiction of the Castile. Count Salinas seized extensive properties in Burgos, and Alfonso Fonseca had a significant dispute with the town of Medina del Campo - yet neither faced the consequences as the monarchs did not want to risk a dispute due to the fear of reprisals, made possible by noble military resources. Thus this evidences that the nobility were of great importance due to their hold of power, which made their relationship with the monarchs vital in asserting royal authority in place.

The corregidores, were of lesser importance to the rule in Castile, due to their limited use and effectiveness in their role. Some would argue that they were significant to ~~the~~ the monarchs as they were set up as a reform method to law and order to try assert control over towns. They looked to oversee justice

		<p>and keep checks on the power of nobility in towns. However, in some places they were hugely resented and seen as overstepping the autonomy of towns in their jurisdiction. In 1483, 3 towns refused to implement them, resisting and blunting their effectiveness and thus importance to the monarchs. Equally, high levels of corruption limited their effectiveness. There were only 51 trained experts in the corregidores, which meant that amidst corruption it was extremely difficult to find replacements. This meant corruption could not be dealt with. For example, Gomez the usual tenure of office was meant to be two years, yet Gomez Manrique held office for 13 years unchecked. The issue here was that nobles were exempt from being checked in power, which allowed for corruption and limited the ability for the corregidores to function with their purpose. This meant that ultimately they were of little importance, as their nobility to be effective limited the extent to which the monarchs utilised them in their rule, thus reducing them comparatively to the lesser</p>
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importance in comparison to the nobility.

In conclusion, the nobility were of greater importance to the rule of Castile under Ferdinand and Isabella. ~~Not only was this~~ This can be seen significantly in evaluating that the importance of the *corregidores* was limited by their restricted effectiveness, due to the power of nobility. Not only does their existence as a curb on noble power prove the importance of nobles in the politics of Castile, but their ~~tolerance~~ due to noble exemption from scrutiny shows further emphasises the argument that the great extent of noble power meant they were largely important in Castile and thus their relationship was of great importance to the monarchs.

Question 2 (b*)

(b)* To what extent was the Catholic Church in Spain strengthened during the reign of Charles I?
[20]

Although there were several strong responses, many candidates lacked the required knowledge to be able to address a range of issues. A number of responses did not go beyond the problem of the Moriscos and Conversos, whereas others tried to make up for their lack of knowledge of developments under Charles by bringing in a great deal of material from the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella.

There was much that could have been said about the Illuminists and Erasmists, while other areas for discussion could have included relations with the Papacy and its impact, the emergence of spiritual leaders from the University of Alcala and the publication of the polyglot Bible. Some were aware of the problem of improving the quality of the priesthood and pointed to the number of clergy who were lacking in education, unable to preach or even recite some of the prayers. The specification indicates the issues that could be considered and these would have provided a valuable starting point for a response.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should make sure that they reach interim judgements at the end of each factor and a concluding judgement in order to access Level 5 and Level 6 of the mark scheme.

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