

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y107/01 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 Y107 series overview

Y107 is one of thirteen units for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about fifty years through an Enquiries or source-based option and an essay. The paper is divided into two sections. In Section A candidates have to answer a compulsory source questions based on four written primary sources. The question requires them to use all four sources to assess the validity of a view. In Section B candidates are required to answer one essay question from a choice of two.

To do well on Section A, candidates need to be able to consider both provenance of the sources and apply contextual knowledge to them in order to reach a judgement about the sources in relation to the issue in the question.

To do well on Section B, candidates need to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. In order 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"> • considered the provenance of the sources and used relevant contextual knowledge • clearly linked the contextual knowledge to the source being discussed to show whether the view of the source was valid or not • reached an overall judgement as to the extent to which the sources supported the view in 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"> • did not consider both the provenance and use contextual knowledge to evaluate the sources • wrote an unbalanced response in their treatment of the sources, with very little consideration of one of the sources • reached a judgement based on their knowledge rather than on the strength of the sources or did not make a judgement at all • showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay • were unable to support their response with relevant material • did not focus on the precise wording of the question • made unsupported comments and assertions about issues. |

Section A overview

The Enquiry section in this unit examines the period from 1553 to 1558 and the issue of how far the succession created political instability. The question requires candidates to critically assess evidence and reach judgements. The critical evaluation of sources is the central theme in this section with all marks awarded against AO2.

Question 1

Mid Tudor Crises 1547–1558

- 1 Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that the issue of the succession never seriously threatened political stability in the years from 1553 to 1558. [30]

There was considerable variation in the quality of responses. However, most candidates were able to access the sources and explain them. Most responses were also able to use some contextual knowledge to evaluate the sources, particularly Sources A and B, but were less secure when considering C and D.

Provenance provided a greater challenge and some candidates were able to use the provenance of the sources to reach a judgement either about each source or overall. Many conclusions were simply a summary of the sources or a conclusion based solely on contextual knowledge of the period.

In discussing Source A many were able to comment on the date, that it appeared there was no instability as the Privy Council appeared to support the plan to exclude Mary and that they issued this in response to Mary's letter. However, stronger responses took this further and commented on the fact that Mary was challenging the Devise and therefore was creating instability or that once Northumberland left London the Council changed their mind, arguing either that this decreased instability or increased it, while others commented on the potential for Civil War.

In discussing Source B many suggested that it showed there was instability because Jane Grey stated that Mary was illegitimate and therefore not Queen, while others argued that because Mary did not want the throne instability would be avoided. Unfortunately, there were a considerable number who did not pick up on the date of the source and see that it was written when Mary was on the throne and Jane was imprisoned and possibly downplaying her role to save her life following the execution of Northumberland. Some argued that this showed that even if there had been instability it had not lasted long as by August Mary was on the throne. There was much that could have been discussed using these two sources and either argument for stability or instability could have been pursued, some also suggested that religion was causing the instability and again this was credited.

Many found Sources C and D much more challenging in terms of applying contextual knowledge and considering their provenance. In discussing C the stronger responses commented on why there was an addition to Mary's will, noting the phantom pregnancies or commenting on the Marriage Treaty that prevented Philip from ruling, this was then often linked to the disquiet caused by the Spanish marriage and how the addition to the will would therefore prevent instability. This was often developed with candidates commenting about the triumph of legitimacy in both 1553 and 1558, suggesting instability was not an issue as many of the gentry and nobility would have been secured with land titles if it had been overridden.

In discussing Source D responses often commented on the fact that the Privy Council had to persuade Mary to name Elizabeth and that Mary did not mention her by name, suggesting she named her reluctantly, suggesting instability. Other responses argued that again this source showed that religion was the issue in causing the potential for instability, while other argued that this was soon resolved and Elizabeth came to throne peacefully and was able to overcome any challenge caused by religion through her religious settlement.

Exemplar 1 is an extract showing a conclusion where the response starts to make a judgement about the sources in relation to the question. There have been a few brief interim judgements but as neither they nor the conclusion are developed it remained at the bottom of the level.

Assessment for learning



Although this may sound obvious, this section is source-based and therefore responses need to be driven by the sources and not contextual knowledge. Contextual knowledge should be a tool to evaluate the sources.

Misconception



Source B was written when Mary was on the throne and this may impact on the purpose of the Source. It is important candidates have a secure understanding of the chronology of the period.

Exemplar 1

Moreover, the source's date further increases the weight, as its discussion of all the events of the 1558 succession, including the developments in Mary's will as she would eventually formally name Elizabeth, is being enabled it to provide a holistic, well-versed account that engages with all angles to better reflect, candidly, the role of succession and its impact on political stability. Thus, as the source's accurate knowledge and stellar presence sustain its argument in favour of the view in the question, the source is one of meritable high weight.

Section B overview

Two essays are set, each from a different Key Topic. The questions set require candidates to analyse the causes and consequences of major historical issues.

Question 2*

Elizabethan England

2* How important was the foreign situation in shaping Elizabeth I's religious policy? [20]

This was the more popular question and there was a considerable range of responses. Many were able to explain some factors that affected Elizabeth's religious policy. Most were able to explain the foreign situation in 1558 and how this had an impact as Elizabeth had to be careful not to offend France or Spain but they did not always go on to link it to precise religious policies. Many responses also considered the religious situation in England and often argued that stability was needed in a divided country. While others argued that the immediate policy was determined by the attitude of the House of Lords which forced Elizabeth into taking the title Supreme Governor. Some responses did consider Elizabeth's own religious preferences and argued that, as the child of the Reformation, she would want to pursue a Protestant settlement. Others argued she had little choice as many Catholics saw her as illegitimate. Also discussed was the 'Puritan choir' and their impact as well as the need to satisfy the Marian exiles.

Many responses went beyond 1558-9 but were less able to link this to religious policies and how they were impacted. There was some discussion of recusancy fines in response to the arrival of missionary priests but many simply asserted that these and other Catholic developments, such as her excommunication, influenced policy without explaining in what way. The strongest responses did focus on 1558-9 and argued that little changed after that and, therefore, it was the factors in place then that were most important.

Exemplar 2 provides a clear example of a response where there is a developed judgement that builds on interim judgements made throughout the essay.

Exemplar 2

To conclude, it is clear that overall the foreign situation was the biggest influence on Elizabeth's foreign policy. This is due to the fact that although King Philip of Spain initially offered his support, Elizabeth refrained from making large Protestant changes in order to avoid war. Whilst her personal beliefs took priority over domestic issues, such as the loss of clergy who did not agree with her changes, she was not prepared to risk the safety of her nation in order to make strong changes to satisfy her ~~religious~~ personal religious beliefs, as the Auld Alliance was ^{too} strong a military force, that she would be unable to deal with.

Question 3*

3* 'Elizabeth's relationship with her parliaments was harmonious.' How far do you agree? [20]

Although this was less popular than Question 2 there were still a significant number of responses. There were a number of candidates who did not understand the term 'harmonious'. Others thought Parliament and the Privy Council were the same thing and wrote at length on the factional struggles within the Council and Elizabeth's intervention. However there was some relevant discussions about Elizabeth's management through Privy Councillors who helped to make sure debates ran smoothly and limited the opportunity for disagreement. A number of responses also focused on how successfully Elizabeth managed Parliament which, at best, was only a partial focus on the question.

Many responses focused on harmonious areas such as the religious settlement, marriage and succession, freedom of speech and monopolies. There were some who noted that at times it was MPs who actually removed fellow members, suggesting that relations were harmonious. The stronger arguments did consider issues such as finance and the fact that Parliament voted to give Elizabeth subsidies on a regular basis, suggesting relations were harmonious, while others also referenced the Golden speech of 1601. The focus on these factors often meant that responses were one sided. There were responses that considered Parliament often focused on local issues and that most legislation was passed without much debate. Some did note that sessions were short as many MPs simply wanted to return home and therefore did not want drawn out debates.

Misconception



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