

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y105/01 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 Y105 series overview

Y105 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 actions of the Duke of York and, in particular, whether he was able and loyal in the years 1450-1455. 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

Wars of the Roses 1445–1461

- 1 Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that the actions of Richard, Duke of York, during the period from 1450 to 1455, reveal him to have been an essentially able and loyal figure. [30]

There were many well-argued responses, with candidates finding the sources accessible and were therefore able to at least explain how they either did or did not support the view that Richard was loyal and able during this period. It was particularly pleasing to see the range of contextual knowledge that was used to evaluate the sources; this was most notable in considering Sources A and B where candidates commented on his position on both France and Ireland. There was also considerable reference to his role during the first Protectorate and many were able to give specific examples of the financial savings, development of the navy and his role in restoring law and order, while others commented on the Dartford coup of 1452. This latter knowledge was also used when considering Source C and its purpose. However, candidates were less secure in using contextual knowledge to evaluate Source D.

Many responses were able to discuss the provenance in some depth, but overall this was the weakest part of many responses and restricted the mark that was achieved in Level 4, where both contextual knowledge and provenance are required. Candidates were again much more secure in discussing Sources A and B than they were in considering C and D, which often had superficial comments.

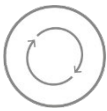
In considering Source A most commented on the date and that it was written when Edward IV was on the throne and therefore likely to present Richard in a favourable light, while weaker responses commented on it being from a chronicle which are usually reliable.

In discussing Source B many considered that it was written during the reign of Henry VII and was therefore likely to be pro-Lancastrian and attempt to justify the Tudor seizure of power by portraying Richard as disloyal.

In considering Source C most saw it as propaganda with Richard rallying support for his coup, while in discussing D there were comments about the extent to which it reflected Henry VI's view or those of his advisors and there was reference to when it was written which linked to Richard's actions by that time.

Having said that, there were many responses that went into Levels 5 and 6 where judgement about sources, as outlined in the introduction, was demonstrated and is shown in Exemplar 1.

Assessment for learning



On the source question there must be a judgement on the strength of the sources supporting each argument. This judgement should come on the provenance of the sources not knowledge of the subject. This is crucial to access Levels 5 and 6.

Exemplar 1

Overall, Source D appears to present the most compelling argument to support the view given its reliable provenance and supporting context. Although sources A and C strongly advocate the support for the view of York's actions making him loyal and able, they are less reliable given the provenance of source A from the reign of Edward IV and source C being by York himself. Although source B does not create a compelling challenge given that in 1452 there was no concrete evidence York desired to take the crown and the provenance being under Henry VII shows it was likely to be pro-Lancastrian. Furthermore, overall the sources more support the view but only with moderate evidence.

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*

England 1461–1509

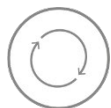
2* 'Richard III was an able ruler.' How far do you agree?

[20]

A significant number of candidates attempted this question. Weaker responses focused heavily on his accession to power, the disappearance of the Princes in the Tower and his defeat at Bosworth, without considering his actual rule between 1483 and 1485. In many responses, even candidates who knew a considerable amount about Richard's rule, discussing issues such as Buckingham's rebellion, the Plantation policy, law and order and foreign policy, focused more on success/failure than whether he was an able ruler. In order to access the higher levels it is crucial that candidates bring their responses back to the actual focus of the question. There were many responses that listed his achievements and failings but did not reach a judgement either overall or about each issue discussed.

The full response to this question from which Exemplar 2 is taken has judgements throughout; it then goes on to pull this together to reach an overall judgement and this then takes the response into Level 6.

Assessment for learning



It is vital that candidates focus on the precise wording of the question. Able and successful are not the same thing.

Exemplar 2

		In conclusion, one could argue that Richard III was an able ruler in his effective changes to government, ensuring swift justice (for instance establishing the Council of the North, that met at York 4 times a year) and appointing capable men of ability, such as Edmund Chadderton and Thomas Barlow.
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		<p>However, one may more reasonably argue that Richard III was an ineffective, rather than able, ruler, seeing his failure to maintain vast support contribute to rebellion (such as Buckingham's October 1483 rebellion) and his poor foreign policy contribute to his loss of the throne at Bosworth, seeing Scots, Frenchmen and Bretons all fight upon the side of Henry Tudor, ^{who claimed to be} Earl of Richmond. Therefore, as the failures of Richard III to maintain support and achieve a successful foreign policy contributed to his ultimate loss of the throne, they may be recognised as more significant factors in judging a ruler's effectiveness (than one's ability to make effective changes to government), ultimately positioning Richard III as an ineffective, rather than able, ruler.</p>
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Question 3*

- 3* 'Royal finances and their administration were Henry VII's greatest domestic achievement.' How far do you agree?

[20]

This was the more popular of the questions and most were able to explain a range of achievements. Many responses began by considering royal finances and the strongest responses often considered the financial situation at the start and end of Henry's reign. There were many responses able to give precise details about, for example, how much income from crown lands increased. In the strongest discussions candidates balanced the achievements against some of the limitations, for example, in customs duties or attempts to raise taxation. Many responses linked the increase in finances to his control of nobility. Candidates considered a range of alternatives, including the control of the nobility, securing the throne, defeating rebellions and the threat from Yorkists/Pretenders.

To reach the higher levels candidates did need to explain why their chosen issue was the 'greatest domestic achievement', with some arguing that simply passing his throne on to his son was the greatest as he was the first monarch since Henry V who, at some point, had not lost the throne, while others argued finances were the greatest achievement because he died solvent.

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