

**AS LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY A**

**H105**

For first teaching in 2015

**Y249/01 Summer 2022 series**

# Contents

Introduction .....	3
Paper Y249/01 series overview .....	4
Section A overview .....	5
Question 1* .....	5
Question 2* .....	7
Section B overview .....	9
Question 3 .....	9

## 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 are 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.

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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 Y249/01 series overview

Y249 provided opportunities for candidates to respond to questions on Tsarism and Bolshevik consolidation. Every candidate followed the questions options correctly by selecting just one of the 20-mark essay questions and so no candidate attempted both essay questions. The most popular question was Question 1. All candidates attempted the interpretations question and most responses focused on evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the given interpretation. The quality of some responses to all the questions was hindered by a lack of detailed knowledge and key words/phrases in the questions not being fully understood. Overall, the quality of written communication was fair to good and responses were clearly organised.

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>• understood the key issues in the questions</li> <li>• knew the key events with reasonable depth of knowledge to be able to effectively support their arguments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• did not focus their responses on the question asked</li> <li>• had a generalised knowledge rather than detailed knowledge</li> <li>• did not manage their time effectively to be able to fully complete responses to both questions.</li> </ul>

### General tip – wording of questions

Candidates would enhance their performance in their responses to all questions if the wording of the questions were considered carefully so that they are more likely to be aware of the specific demands of the question.

## Section A overview

Both questions in this section were answered by candidates, with Question 1 being more popular.

### Question 1\*

1\* 'The disunity of the White forces was the most important reason for the Red victory in the Russian Civil War.' How far do you agree?

**[30]**

Responses to this question needed to write about the reasons for Reds victory in the Russian Civil War and assess the extent to which the disunity of the Whites was the most important.

Most candidates were able to write about the given factor but a significant number gave generalised knowledge without naming some of the White leaders such as Kolchak, Denikin and Yudenich and giving some knowledge about their differences. Few candidates attempted to discuss whether there is any evidence that the Whites were united. Some candidates did attempt to do this, as shown in Exemplar 1 which follows.

Most candidates explained the counter argument that it was the strengths of the Reds that was the main reason for their success. More accomplished responses extended the reasons to include other factors such as the role of foreign intervention.

## Exemplar 1

The disunity of the Whites was an important factor, although it wasn't the most important. This is because, their disunity only made ~~the~~ it easier for the Reds, but the strength of the Red Army would likely have defeated the Whites anyway. Firstly, the Whites ~~are~~ had no united set of aims, which is key to having a successful campaign. For example, some ~~of~~ ~~some~~ soldiers were socialists, and others were conservatives; ~~and~~ ~~and~~. This weakened the Whites campaign; as it meant that they were all fighting for different ~~things~~ outcomes, which therefore gave the Reds an advantage. Furthermore there was no unity and co-operation between the different White armies. For example, Admiral Kolchak's army of 140,000 men, did not co-operate with Yudenich's army of 15,000 men. This made the Whites campaign far less strong, as they were not able to co-ordinate their forces together, like the Reds were. In addition, the Whites had <sup>geographical</sup> no unity in the territory ~~that~~ that they gained. For example, the Whites had 20 square miles

Exemplar 1 is an extract from a Level 4 candidate response that clearly links a cause to the named factor i.e. the disunity of the Whites. There is some knowledge provided in naming some of the leaders of the Whites and the size of their armies, but the remainder of the knowledge is generalised. There was an opportunity for further knowledge concerning the 'differing outcomes' and why Kolchak and Yudenich did not co-operate.

## Question 2\*

2\* 'The purges were the main reason for Stalin's consolidation of power in Russia between 1929 and 1941.' How far do you agree? [30]

Responses needed to write about the reasons that Stalin was able to consolidate his power between 1929-41. Most candidates were able to explain the role of the Purges using a reasonable level of knowledge and understanding. Some candidates needed to explain in more detail how the Purges increased Stalin's control rather than just describe what happened (see Exemplar 2). Most candidates assessed other factors against the role of the Purges with the better candidates providing a wider range of factors than just propaganda. These responses included analysis of the use of harsh economic policies, such as Collectivisation, to extend control in the countryside. Very few responses considered how Stalin consolidated his power through his genuine popularity with many Soviet citizens in the towns due to the improvement in living standards in the 1930's.

The most common error in this question was candidates provided knowledge and evidence from the 1920s which was more concerned with Stalin's rise to power rather than his consolidation of power in the 1930's.

## Exemplar 2

However show trials were also extremely influential in Stalin's consolidation of power as they enabled him to eliminate old Bolsheviks within the Communist Party that were present during Lenin's rule and possibly sympathetic towards him but to the detriment of Stalin. This can be seen in the trial of the seven in 1936 where Zinoviev and Kamenev were both executed in addition to the trial of the seventeen in 1937 which saw 18 out of 17 of the accused executed and the remaining 4 being sent to die in gulags. This greatly aided Stalin's consolidation of power as it put him in a strong position to manipulate the structure of the Communist Party to benefit himself as 'old Bolsheviks' such as Zinoviev and Kamenev had knowledge of Lenin's Testament which was not only very unflattering - not only offered a very unflattering view of Stalin but also favoured Trotsky quite heavily in

comparison to him. These show trials enabled Stalin to populate the communist party with loyal supporters in addition to ~~the~~ disposing those who could justly challenge his position and threaten his power. However, show trials weren't wholly successful as ~~the~~ play ~~was~~ was identifiable and in some cases quite prominent. For example, during Bukharin's trial in which he was accused of murdering ~~the~~ Kirov, he claimed political responsibility although he was imprisoned at the time of Kirov's murder. For this reason Stalin did generate some discontent publically as well as within the party as it was overwhelming evident in some cases that individuals were wrongly accused and manipulated into confession. Overall, show trials can still be seen as extremely successful as Stalin was able to accomplish <sup>one</sup> his main aims of consolidating power through

Exemplar 2 is an extract from a Level 4 candidate response where there is an attempt to provide some knowledge of the Purges and then explain how the Show Trials enabled Stalin to consolidate his power.



## Section B overview

All candidates attempted this question. It was clear that the question required a wider contextual awareness of the effects of Stolypin's policies on stability in the years before 1914. Candidates often wrote about the strengths and weaknesses. When this was done explicitly, the discriminating factor was the quality and accuracy of knowledge deployed to effectively evaluate the interpretation. Analysis of the attribution of the interpretation was uncommon; this is Assessment Objective 2 and not required on this paper.

### Question 3

- 3 Read the interpretation and then answer the question that follows:

'Stolypin's policies gave the Russian government breathing space, which might have continued if the war had not broken out in 1914.'

**Adapted from: H . Rogger, *Russia in the Age of Modernisation and Revolution, 1983***

Evaluate the strengths and limitations of this interpretation as an explanation of Russia's stability between 1906 and the outbreak of war in 1914, making reference to other interpretations that you have studied. **[20]**

Candidates were able to address aspects of the interpretation to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses.

Responses to this question needed to be focused on three aspects of this interpretation. Firstly, the focus needed to be on Stolypin's policies. Secondly, the focus needed to be on an understanding of 'breathing space' in relation to Russia's stability and thirdly on the years 1906-14.

Some responses did not show awareness of the period concerned in the question and provided knowledge and analysis of Witte's policies before 1906. A significant number of candidates had a generalised knowledge of Stolypin's policies and attempted a discussion of whether his policies were successful or not rather than analysing the effect the policies on stability in Russia. There was limited analysis of Stolypin's policies, such as the drive to industrialisation which led hardship and strikes that, therefore, increased instability. The more accomplished responses provided an attempt to discuss whether Stolypin policies provided a 'breathing space' in the years leading to 1914 (see Exemplar 3) and the responses made regular references to the concept. Some responses made no reference to 'breathing space' at all, despite having some good knowledge. Candidates should be aware that to reach Levels 4 and 5 responses need to be focused on the question.

There were a significant number of responses that did not make references to other interpretations, but this may have been due to a mismanagement of time in the examination as some responses were unfinished.

## Exemplar 3

to increase by 210%. which was significant for the <sup>economic</sup> generation of Russia, which allowed for Russia to start becoming more independent internationally. Moreover Stolypin's reform on the wages of the strong allowed for Russia to move into industrialised areas whereby more job opportunities opened up which was vital for economic growth of Russia ensuring their stability. Thus Rogger's interpretation advocating for Stolypin's reform being the reason for Russia's stability gains support as it is clear that it aided in Russia's economic and social growth.

Exemplar 3 is an extract from a Level 3 candidate response that has some knowledge of Stolypin's reforms and links it to stability but does not develop the analysis to include reference to 'breathing space'.

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