

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y316/01 Summer 2023 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.

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Paper Y316/01 series overview

Y316 is one of twenty-one units for Paper 3 of 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:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • showed a clear understanding of the views of the two interpretations in relation to the question • were able to use contextual knowledge to test the interpretations, linking that knowledge directly to the interpretation through evaluative words • were able to consider both the strengths and limitations of both interpretations using contextual knowledge • in answering the essay, questions cover 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • showed a limited understanding of one or both of the 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 progress in negotiations for Home Rule by 1914. [30]

Both passages were largely well understood and many candidates were able to access the higher levels by clearly linking their own knowledge to the views of the passages in relation to the progress in negotiations for Home Rule by 1914. Most were able to understand the difference between Passage A's view that no agreement was possible in 1914 with Passage B's argument that all sides saw the need for compromise and that it was the outbreak of the First World War that prevented an agreement being reached. There was a surprising number of responses that brought in evidence from much earlier in the period and some gave a potted history of the journey towards Home Rule up to this point, which only distracted from the need to focus on the period from 1908-14. Some less successful responses had only the vaguest knowledge of the main events in Ireland in this period and a few ignored the reference to the outbreak of war from Passage B. There was also a tendency to state that the historian had 'failed to mention' something and candidates should be encouraged to focus on engaging with the argument in the passage rather than evaluating by omission.

Exemplar 1

Both passages explain the progress in negotiations for Home Rule by 1914, including the idea of partition as well as the more radical creation of Unionist groups to oppose Home Rule. Passage A argues that negotiations for partition made very little progress, while Passage B argues that Unionist groups rose to oppose Home Rule while politically, both sides knew they would have to compromise and would have done so if not for World War I. It will be argued that Passage B was more convincing because it mentioned the groups that opposed Home Rule as well as the inevitability of compromise.

Passage A argues that when the idea of partition emerged in 1911, "the Cabinet decided against proceeding with the idea of any such compromise", referring to the idea that as part of the Home Rule bill, the Ulster plantation counties would be excluded from the rest of Ireland and this was promoted by Edward Carson, a prominent Unionist figure. This is a ~~convincing~~ somewhat convincing argument because although the government did not want to split Ireland up, they also knew that with the increasing levels of conflict between Unionists and Home

Rulers, they would eventually have to give the Unionist some form of compromise in order to calm the situation so it ~~didn't~~ would not escalate. Moreover, Passage A argues that the Irish party firmly rejected the compromise, declaring that "Irish Nationalists can never be assenting parties to the mutilation of the Irish nation." This again refers to partition which would be separating Ulster from the rest of Ireland. ~~This~~ This is a convincing explanation because Redmond and the IPP were firmly Irish nationalists which meant that they believed in Irish unity and identity, so the idea of partition would be going against their values and their ideals of an Irish nation. Finally, Passage A argues that in the end "no deal was made and ~~nothing~~ nothing finalised" which "reflects the deep disagreement and the entrenched position taken by either side", and this refers to 1914 where despite ~~was~~ a lot of meetings for negotiations, the start of the First World War meant that the negotiation talks would be paused. This argument is only somewhat convincing, however, because although

no compromise was reached, the Unionists know that since the Home Rule bill was passed, they could no longer stop Home Rule entirely and so their narrative changed. ~~and~~ By pushing the idea of partition, Unionists were already agreeing on some form of compromise so they were not entirely entrenched in their own position. Overall, Passage A is mostly convincing because it brings up the negotiations about partition and how both parties had firm stances for or against the issue, but its downside is that it does not consider the long-term consequences of the issue and whether or not both sides were more willing to compromise, even if they did not publicly admit it, than the writer gives them credit for.

Meanwhile, Passage B argues that the progress in negotiations for the Unionists was hindered by Ulster supporters in Ireland who "pledged themselves to resist a Home Rule Parliament" as well as "the creation of para-military groups with totally opposed objectives". This refers to Ulster Unionists who ~~had~~ signed the ^{Thousands of} Solemn League and Covenant in 1912 to resist Home Rule, and also groups such as

the UVF which emerged in around 1913 and by the end of the year had 100000 members enrolled and drilling, running arms to Laine in preparation for civil war. From the nationalist side there ~~was~~ ^{were} the Irish Volunteers as a response, with 160000 members by the end of 1914. This argument is convincing because it showed that a conflict was escalating, and the supporters of both sides were firmly against the ideas of the opposing side, meaning that they were less willing to negotiate. Furthermore, Passage B argues that "By 1914 the Government and the Unionists had agreed to some form of compromise" ~~which~~ ~~contradicted~~ which refers to the idea of partition. Asquith proposed that six of the plantation counties could opt out of Home rule for a certain period of time. This is mostly convincing because the government knew they could not just ignore the requests of the Unionists, given the increasing militancy of the movement, so Asquith would have to negotiate, while the Unionists also knew that they could not actually stop Home Rule so they also had to compromise. Lastly, Passage B

argues that "the crisis of the First World War overtook the Irish Question". This is convincing because ~~it is convincing because~~ Ireland decided to be involved in the war from 1914 to 1918, postponing the implementation of the Home Rule Bill and de-escalating the tension between nationalists and Unionists, ~~that is convincing~~ and it showed that the progress in negotiations was once again hindered, although the writer claims that "if the parties had been forced to continue the negotiations, a constitutional settlement would almost certainly have been reached". This implies that both sides had actually made some progress in negotiations and would eventually have been able to compromise. This is convincing as it would be nearly impossible for Asquith to ignore Unionist concerns since they were becoming violent and had a mass movement, but so did the nationalists. Overall Passage B is very convincing because it considers the progress in negotiations in some aspects including the idea that both sides were more willing to compromise than they would publicly admit, because of the threats from their oppositions. It also considers

the lack of progress in other aspects due to the hard-liners and their paramilitary movements, as well as the First World War which paused negotiations.

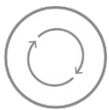
In conclusion, both Passage A and B are convincing, as Passage A argues there was little progress in negotiations because both sides were very firm on their positions, while Passage B argues there was some progress although not a lot, because many Unionists & nationalists were firmly against the other side and refused to compromise, while the leaders were actually more moderate and more willing to compromise, and the war also hindered progress.

However overall Passage B is more convincing as it considers the significance of Unionist and nationalist movements and their reflection of public opinion, and it contradicts Passage A by saying that the two groups would eventually have reached a compromise if not for the war, while Passage A claims that ~~both sides~~ it was impossible for compromise. However Passage A fails to consider that if not for the War, the growing pressure from both

sides meant that a compromise would have to be reached to avoid civil war. Hence there was actually some progress in negotiations because both sides knew they would have to compromise or concede at least a little. Hence, overall Passage B is more convincing as an explanation of the progress in negotiations for Home Rule by 1914.

This is an example of a Level 6 response which starts with an overview of the argument in each passage in relation to the question and then evaluates each passage effectively using strong own knowledge.

Assessment for learning



Make sure that candidates take an overview of the argument in each of the two passages in relation to the issue in the question.

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 in order 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 answers will test an hypothesis and reach a supported judgement.

Question 2*

- 2*** 'The Roman Catholic Church was consistently opposed to the Union from 1791 to 1921.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

This was the least popular essay question and was generally not well answered. There were some effective responses. These looked at to what degree the Catholic Church supported or condemned constitutional, revolutionary, and cultural nationalism. Others considered how and why various religious, political, and economic reforms were able to appease the Church and reduce opposition across the whole period. Less successful candidates often went for a chronological approach starting in the 1820s and ending in the 1880s which gave them a limited coverage of the period. A few candidates misread the question and wrote about Catholics more generally.

Question 3*

- 3*** 'Partition in 1921 did more to reduce tensions over the Union than any other reforms in the period from 1791 to 1921.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

This was the most popular question and was well answered. Many candidates established the themes of political, religious, and economic reforms across the period and assessed the success of Partition in reducing tensions compared to other reforms within each theme. There were a few excellent responses that explained why tensions surrounding particular reforms were high and therefore why the reform had such an impact. Less successful responses took a chronological approach and some ran out of time and had a rush to get to Partition at the end of the period. There were a few who were confused over what Partition itself was and confused it with Home Rule.

Question 4*

4* 'The Famine (1845–1849) had a greater impact on Irish Nationalism than any other economic factor in the years 1791 to 1921.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

Most candidates were able to identify economic themes which were usually famine, land issues and regional differences between industrial Ulster and the rural south and west. However, only the most successful responses were able to link these themes to their impact on Irish nationalism in the period. For example, the effect of the famine not only inspired nationalist sentiment at the time but underpinned the arguments of later nationalists. Furthermore, the famine was a flashpoint but that land issues had more of an impact on nationalism over most of the period.

A few responses took a thematic approach of looking at constitutional, revolutionary and cultural nationalism. This worked well, as the famine could be compared to other economic issues within each theme. Less successful responses tended to describe economic problems without linking them to Irish nationalism. Many focused only on the 1840s and 1880s.

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