

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY A**

**H505**

For first teaching in 2015

**Y222/01 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.

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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## Paper Y222/01 series overview

Y222/01 is one of twenty four units in Paper 2 for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about 100 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 had to answer both parts of one question.

To do well on the short-answer essay question, candidates needed to consider the significance or importance of 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 needed to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. To reach the higher levels, candidates needed to assess the issues they discussed and reach a supported judgement, at least in the conclusion.

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

## Question 1 (a)

- 1 (a) Which of the following Western policies in Post War Asia was the least successful?
- (i) US involvement with Jiang Jieshi, 1945–1949
  - (ii) UN involvement in Korea, 1945–1949

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

[10]

This was the more popular of the two questions on the paper and elicited the full range of responses. The best of these focused on the specific wording of the question - comparing the US and UN involvements in China and Korea in the period 1945-49 and evaluating their relative successes.

In dealing with Jiang Jieshi, many candidates found it profitable to focus specifically on US involvement rather than the failures of Jiang Jieshi. A discussion of the effectiveness of the money and resources sent to him was seen in these responses, as was the collapse of the truce brokered by Marshall. The most successful responses examined the 'China white paper' in 1949 which effectively conceded that Jiang couldn't be saved as being evidence of the lack of success. Weaker responses concentrated on the failures of Jiang and did not consider the effects of US involvement.

In dealing with UN involvement, some candidates were unable to investigate to the same level of detail meaning that their responses were partial or uneven in focus. Candidates who examined the supervision of elections in 1947, or how UN forces were used to defend South Korea or indeed how they did not prevent border skirmishes in 1948-49 were suitably rewarded. A significant minority went on to discuss events after 1949 and found themselves restricted to the lower levels of the mark scheme as seen in Exemplar 1, which was given Level 3: 3 marks.

## Exemplar 1

1	a	<p>US involvement with Jiang Jieshi was unsuccessful. Jiang Jieshi was a constant irritant to those working with him from the US as he consistently failed to fight against the spread of communism. The US backed Jiang Jieshi against the more popular Mao Zedong in the hopes that Jieshi would gain power and take control of China, but due to Jieshi's poor decision making Mao consistently outperformed him gaining the backing of the people and <del>taking control of</del> eventually taking control of China. The members of the US that worked with Jieshi all had negative and usually racist things to say about Jieshi as he was impossible to manage and displayed terrible leadership qualities. US involvement with Jiang Jieshi was the least successful.</p>
		<p>UN involvement in Korea between 1945-1949 was more successful. Despite the Korean war being difficult the UN involvement was successful at maintaining the dividing line at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. The Inchon landing was tremendously successful and pushed North Korea back, they also did great work in providing aid and training in South Korea. They also brought a technological advantage that led to a stalemate in the Iron hills which aided in the peace talks as North Korea was literally backed into a corner. <del>White to UN</del> in UN involvement in Korea was more successful.</p>

		<del>While</del> <del>to</del> <del>UN</del> involvement
		White VN involvement in Korea was still more
		successful it also wasn't entirely successful as all
		that was really accomplished was maintaining
		a middle split in the country compared to
		US involvement with Jiang Jieshi it was
		successful as with Jiang Jieshi the US
		actively lost ground especially when Jieshi fled
		to Taiwan leaving China to the communists.

**Assessment for learning**



Part A responses should be balanced and focus on the specific wording and dates in the question when considering both features. There must also be a judgement reached.

**Question 1 (b)\***

**(b)\*** 'Guerrilla warfare by the Vietcong was the main reason for their victory in Vietnam.' How far do you agree? **[20]**

This was generally well-answered with most candidates able to produce a response which dealt with several key factors including the use of guerrilla tactics and the leadership of the North Vietnamese army. This was usually contrasted with the failure of the Americans to win over 'hearts and minds' in Vietnam, the failures of US tactics and the problems that ensued in the American troops, as well as the failure of South Vietnam's military and political leadership and a growing opposition movement in the USA.

The best responses tackled these issues in detail and were able to use precise knowledge of key battles as well as statistics as seen in Exemplar 2. This response was given Level 6: 17 marks. Good responses examined specific details such as the use of the Ho Chi Minh trail or the Cu Chi tunnels and gave details about specific guerrilla successes.

Many responses wrote more generally and without support and so did not reach the higher levels of the mark scheme.

## Exemplar 2

1	b	<p>The Viet Cong was a southern Communist force which rose up in the opposition of Diem's corrupt regime and in favour of Ho Chi Minh, initially under the name 'National Liberation Front' in the 1960s. The word 'victory' is <del>not</del> <sup>crucial</sup> to analysing this question as the word 'victory' is the crux of the question, and refers to winning the war, which was achieved in 1975.</p> <p><del>To analyse this question, the main factors</del>  The main factors which caused such a victory in <del>the</del> <sup>the</sup> war was the use of <sup>guerrilla</sup> <del>guerrilla</del> warfare, the poor US strategy and the incompetence of the southern regime. In <del>whilst</del> <sup>whilst</sup> each a</p> <p>Whilst each factor undeniably played a role in the victory of the Viet Cong, it will be argued that the primary factor for this was the <sup>a</sup> poor US strategy.</p> <p>Despite this the effectiveness of <sup>guerrilla</sup> <del>guerrilla</del> warfare by the Viet Cong cannot be <del>overstated</del> <sup>overstated</sup>. Utilising their knowledge of terrain, the Viet Cong were successful in attacking and fending off US troops using booby traps, additionally their use of tunnels and the Ho Chi Minh trail allowed communist <sup>guerrillas</sup> <del>guerrillas</del> to survive bombing and receive weaponry. The effectiveness of such <sup>guerrilla</sup> <del>guerrilla</del> warfare can be seen in 1968, where the US base in Pleiku was overrun by Viet Cong <sup>guerrillas</sup> <del>guerrillas</del>.</p>
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demonstrating the ~~via~~ effectiveness of such strategies. Alternatively, the ineffectiveness of guerrilla warfare can be seen at the Tet offensive in 1968, when the Viet Cong were unable to take control of Southern Vietnam, leading to a heavy casualties. Despite this, the effectiveness of the Viet Cong's ~~guerrilla~~ <sup>guerrilla</sup> warfare can be seen with their victory in 1975 as they are able to successfully overthrow the Southern government and unite Vietnam.

However, the fear of US Strategy, undoubtedly facilitates the success of and amplified the effect of guerrilla warfare. US Strategy initially revolved around heaps of foreign aid to 'win the hearts and minds' of the Vietnamese, but due to embarrassment of bombing under Operation Rolling Thunder in 1965, Southern attitudes outwardly opposed US involvement. Furthermore, with the collapse of the South Vietnamese economy due to the introduction of the dollar, alongside atrocities such as the 1968 My Lai Massacre, killing around 340, the US and Southern forces were unable to win the 'hearts and minds' of the Vietnamese. However US Strategy did see some success, which prolonged the Viet Cong's victory, which was seen through the 1969-70 bombing campaign.

Cambodia, under Nixon's 'Madman theory'. Evidently, this policy was successful in Vietnam, allowing for us with naval, however this policy led to the collapse of the Lon Nol regime problems in Cambodia. As such, due to strategic failures despite the superior military might of the US, the Viet Cong were able to claim victory in 1975 because the US had withdrawn from Vietnam in 1972 under the guise of 'peace with honour'. As such, it can be concluded that that poor US strategy led to the victory of the Viet Cong in 1975.

The incompetence of South Vietnam was a final reason for the victory of the Viet Cong. Not only was the South a corrupt state with vast embezzlement and nepotism under Diem, a lack of reform led to the state having little support from its unstable inhabitants. As a result the Viet Cong were able to hide amongst the population and recruit guerrillas, allowing the expansion of their forces. This sentiment was only exacerbated by martial law in 1963 and the South Vietnamese ordering the deaths of suspected communists, as such the people of South Vietnam often supported the Viet Cong. Furthermore, the incompetence of the ARVN can be seen in the 1963 Battle of Ap Bac, where 5 US

helicopters are shot down and despite the ARVN surrounding the Viet Cong, they refused to shoot in fear of upsetting the population. The idea of South Vietnamese incompetence continues under Nixon in the early 1970s, where he implements Vietnamisation, in order to make the ARVN self-sufficient. However, it can be argued that these incompetencies were facilitated by poor strategy calls of the US, such as napalm bombing, strategic hamlets and the use of agent orange, all of which reduced the quality of life for South Vietnamese citizens. As such, despite the effect of the <sup>incompetence</sup> ~~incompetence~~ of the Southern Vietnamese state, it can be concluded that the effects of poor US strategy was the greatest factor for the Viet Cong's victory in 1975.

In conclusion, the idea that guerrilla warfare was the main reason for the victory of the Viet Cong is somewhat agreeable. This is due to the fact that it gave them an inherent combat advantage, however had it not been for a lack of effective US strategies, then due to the sheer force of the US military the Viet Cong would not be able to achieve victory. As such the victory of the Viet Cong can be attributed to ineffective US strategy, providing the Viet Cong with popular support and offering them an opportunity to invade by

		withdrawing their own troops in 1972. Perhaps,
		whilst guerrilla warfare by the Viet Cong was
		undeniably a large reason for their victory
		in Vietnam, it can be <del>ent</del> concluded that the
		main reason for their victory in Vietnam was
		the poor and ineffective strategies adopted by
		the <del>US</del> US.

### Assessment for learning



Candidates should make sure that arguments are substantiated with relevant factual material. When evaluating how successful guerrilla tactics were, candidates should support their responses by including material that demonstrates this, such as the attack on Pleiku in February 1965 or the attack on Da Nang in July 1965.

### Question 2 (a)

- 2 (a) Which of the following was most affected by the outcome of the Korean War in the period from 1953 to 1977?
- (i) South Korea
  - (ii) North Korea

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

[10]

Few candidates answered this question. The best responses considered a range of impacts of the Korean War across both regions. These included damage to infrastructure, the cost in human lives, and then in the South the impact of American investment and the emergence of democracy. This was compared to the North with the development of a communist regime supported by China and the USSR. The best responses compared the regimes of Rhee and Kim.

### Question 2 (b)\*

- (b)\* 'The US was consistent in its policy towards China and Taiwan in the period from 1949 to 1979.' How far do you agree? [20]

The best responses examined the consistency of US policy, particularly in the period up to 1971 with the US keen to protect Taiwanese interests. Then candidates argued that this appeared to change after 1971 because stronger relations with China were pursued after this date.

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