

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y206/01 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.

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Paper Y206/01 series overview

Y206/01 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 (a), 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"> • gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short-answer essay • reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important • linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question • discussed at least two relevant issues in depth in the essay question • provided 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"> • considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way • produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response • were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question • showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay • were unable to support their answer with relevant or accurate material • did not focus on the precise wording of the question • made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

Question 1 (a)

- 1 (a) Which of the following had greater powers as monarch?
- (i) Isabella
 - (ii) Ferdinand

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

[10]

Responses showed a good level of knowledge and were usually able to discuss a wide range of issues. Most responses argued that Isabella had greater powers, although some argued that in a military sense and after Isabella's death, Ferdinand had greater power. There was often mention of the marriage contract and how Isabella gained from it, while others also commented on the size and wealth of Castile, often comparing it with Aragon. Comparisons were also made between the powers Isabella had over the Cortes and those of Ferdinand. While a comparative approach was not essential, responses that did this well usually scored highly. In discussing the powers of Ferdinand, most commented on his military prowess and also commented on his control in Naples, although some did compare that with Isabella's gaining of the New World.

Assessment for learning



Candidates are not expected to cover every issue; the strongest responses usually consider three issues and develop them in order to reach a supported judgement.

Exemplar 1

1	a)	<p>While Isabella had greater formal power than Ferdinand throughout her rule until she died in 1504 (partly due to Castile being inherently more powerful than Aragon), Ferdinand had much more power over military operations, and became increasingly powerful in Castile as time went on, especially when Isabella died.</p>
		<p>Isabella Isabella had greater power as a monarch nominally, as the disputed was the dominant monarch over <u>Castile</u>; Castile, was was four times the size of Aragon geographically (meaning it had better access to material resources), and its population comprised over 80% of the entire Iberian peninsula. Castile was also more centralised than Aragon (which was composed of many units, such as Valencia, Catalonia and the Balearics); therefore, Isabella</p>

①	a)	<p>was able to exert her authority in Castile more powerfully than Ferdinand could in Aragon. Isabella also had arguably more power over Castilian nobles and towns than Ferdinand did Aragonese ones; the implementation of 66 corregidores across Spain increased Isabella's control, the renew organisation of the Santa Hermandad increased Isabella's financial power (in the late 1480s they generate about 22,000 ducats per year, and in the early 1490s this increased to 32000), and Isabella's control over nobles increased the stability of her rule and gave her military support in Castile (e.g., Archbishop of Santiago supplied 3000 soldiers during war of succession, and Cardinal Mendoza 1000 soldiers during Granada war 1482 1482-92). Overall, in terms of administration of her territory Isabella had more</p>
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①	a)	power than Ferdinand, and her power as a monarch was arguably inherently greater due to Castile's superiority.
		However, Ferdinand's military power was greater than Isabella's; indeed, he was often the leader of Castilian wars (such as the Battle of Toro, 1476, when he defended Isabella's right to rule, or the Granada Reconquista which he led, despite the fact Granada to came under the kingdom of Castile). Moreover, although the initial contract of Isabella and Ferdinand disadvantaged Ferdinand - as he was forced to reside in Castile, and all decisions related to Castile were made in accordance with Isabella's wishes - limiting his power both in Aragon and

①	2)	<p>Castile, changes made in 1476/9 (e.g., Isabella stated Ferdinand could govern as monarch in her absence) increased his power. Finally, when Isabella died (1504), he eventually became regent of Castile (1507), increasing his power.</p>
		<p>Overall, Isabella's power was much more centralised and administratively ordered than Ferdinand's; however, with Ferdinand's power over Iberian foreign policy and international relations (e.g., with the Pope), his powers increased, as reflected in the altering of the marriage contract.</p>

Exemplar 1 considers a range of issues and reaches a substantiated and supported judgement and was therefore placed in Level 6: 9 marks.

Question 1 (b)*

(b)* 'Protecting Spanish interests during the Italian Wars was the main priority of Charles I's foreign policy.' How far do you agree?

[20]

Responses displayed a good range of knowledge and most covered a wide range of examples in order to provide a comprehensive survey. In arguing about protecting Spanish interests in the Italian wars, many discussed the importance of Milan and used the amount of time and money that was spent in fighting in Italy to support their argument. There was also discussion of the importance of Sicily to maintaining Spanish interests, while some also considered the importance of controlling the Papacy. Communications also played a role in some responses and there was mention of the supply of grain. However, these issues were usually contrasted with a range of other concerns. A number of responses suggested that it was not Spanish interest in the Italian Wars that was Charles' main concern but the importance of preserving or even expanding his monarquia. There was also discussion of his concern to protect Christendom from Islam, seen in his struggle with the Ottomans and also with the Barbary pirates. In considering the latter some expressed concerns about protecting trade and security. This was also broadened to include a discussion of the potential threat posed by the Lutherans in Germany. In many responses there was also discussion as to the threat from France and the need to secure Spanish borders, while the issue of Burgundy, being the Habsburg homeland, was also considered. There was plenty for candidates to consider and most were able to explain a range of issues, even if judgements were absent or thin.

Question 2 (a)

2 (a) Which of the following was of greater importance in Charles I's rule of Spain?

- (i) Relations with the nobility
- (ii) Relations with the towns

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

[10]

This was the more popular question, and a wide range of responses were seen. Less successful responses wrote very generally about both issues, while the most successful responses provided precise examples of both towns and nobles to support their argument.

In discussing relations with the nobility, there was often reference to Charles I's poor relations with them in the early years, with less successful responses often focusing solely on the period to 1522. However, most were able to consider the nobility's role in controlling towns and in the countryside. There was some discussion of their tax exemption in return for their loyalty. There was some discussion as to whether their role decreased with the use of letrados and whether their role in central government declined so that their importance was more in the countryside.

In discussing the towns, most responses mentioned the Comuneros and Germania revolts and often linked this to the nobility and their role in suppressing them. Less successful responses often went no further than this and did not consider their importance in taxation, the position of the Cortes or the role of the corregidores.

Question 2 (b)*

(b)* 'Isabella's marriage to Ferdinand was the main reason why she was able to secure the throne of Castile.' How far do you agree? [20]

Most responses were able to explain a range of reasons as to why Isabella was able to secure the throne of Castile. Some responses discussed later issues that were less relevant and focused more on her consolidation of power. In discussing the importance of her marriage to Ferdinand most commented on his military skills and the force he was able to muster for the Battle of Toro. Similarly, others commented on how the marriage helped to bring stability in a period of civil war. Candidates also commented on the terms of the marriage contract which did much to reassure Castilians and end the fears of Ferdinand's domination. Responses also discussed the importance of the birth of an heir and how this helped to secure the succession, again offering stability, and contrasted this with the situation of Isabella's rival Joanna.

In discussing other factors, most examined the claim of Joanna and questions surrounding both her legitimacy and her marriage. Many responses gave much credit to Isabella, often noting her actions in proclaiming herself queen in 1474, her skill in securing support from influential nobles and her tour around the major towns of Spain.

Exemplar 2

		Isabella's marriage to Ferdinand Ferdinand in the war war of succession was the primary reason she was able to secure the throne, as Ferdinand's military expertise was crucial at tipping points during the war, and his support underpinned the role of the nobles. A third factor to be considered is is the papacy, ^{and towns} is but this is the least important reason, is with the the marriage to Ferdinand being of paramount importance.
		Isabella's marriage of to Ferdinand is clearly the

main ~~reason~~ reason she could ~~then~~ secure the throne.
 First, he provided ~~valuable~~ military expertise and sophisticated knowledge of advanced artillery, whilst also providing 40,000 Aragonese troops. This was especially crucial in key tipping points during the War of Succession, such as the 1476 Battle of Toro, where Ferdinand successfully forced Alfonso into retreat. This was significant because the Toro victory solidified ~~by~~ the papacy's support for Isabella, and also increased noble support for her - after the battle, Pacheco, a key noble switched his allegiance to ~~the~~ Isabella. ~~For~~ Moreover, it was shortly after the Battle of Toro that Isabella was crowned queen at the Cortes of Madrigal, exemplifying it as the main turning point that tipped the scales in her favour, showing Ferdinand's ~~key~~ exceptional military skills to be of crucial importance. Not only was Ferdinand important in military regards, he was also extremely important in diplomacy. ~~He~~ In 1473, he facilitated the end of the Navarre civil war, ~~which~~ stopping Alfonso's plans to use the French to distract ~~Spanish~~ ^{Isabella's} forces, which was ultimately of critical importance in ensuring that Isabella was not fighting a war on two fronts. Ferdinand was therefore the most important reason Isabella secured the throne because not only did he provide the military expertise required to win the Battle of Toro, a key tipping point, he also gained the advantage of not fighting

a war on two fronts through his diplomatic skills, thus making him the pivotal deciding factor in Isabella's success.

Noble support of Isabella was certainly important through funding and resources, as well as the ~~geograph~~ geographical advantage provided. Despite this, the noble support can be underpinned by the actions of Ferdinand, whose diplomatic skills enabled Isabella to enjoy the support of the three most powerful noble families in Castile - Mendoza, ~~Enrique~~ Enriquez, Toledo. The nobles played an important role in funding the ~~the~~ Aragonese army, allowing for a successful military outcome. Mendoza provided 1000 horses and 2000 soldiers during the battle of Toro, which accounted for one ~~the~~ 1/4 of the army. He further owned 90,000 vassals and controlled the Basque counties, which gave Ferdinand a ~~geograph~~ geographical ~~auto~~ advantage. It was important in Isabella securing ~~with~~ military victory, and by ~~extension~~ extension, the throne of Castile, because it allowed for a well-funded army, advanced artillery, and the means to embark on lengthy and costly military ~~explicit~~ ^{endeavour}. However, Ferdinand underpins noble support, creating a stable base of support, which ~~was~~ was crucial because nobles were fickle and switched allegiances often, based off ~~whom~~ ~~whomever~~ ^{whomever} appeared to be closer to victory.

at any given time throughout a war. Ferdinand ~~secured~~ secured Mendoza's support by getting ~~the~~ the Pope to grant him a cardinalship in return for his support. Similarly, Ferdinand's ~~its~~ impact cannot be ~~it~~ ~~was~~ ~~not~~ ~~at~~ ~~all~~ ~~less~~ ~~than~~ ~~that~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~other~~ ~~side~~ ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~nobles~~ ~~such~~ ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~Paçeros~~ ~~switched~~ ~~to~~ ~~supporting~~ ~~Isabella~~ ~~after~~ ~~the~~ ~~successful~~ ~~Battle~~ ~~of~~ ~~Tordesillas~~. It is therefore evident that whilst noble support enabled a well-funded and well-armed army, the support of fickle and unreliable nobles was turned into an effective and secure support base that ~~it~~ enabled Isabella to win military victories against Alfonso, ~~was~~ by Ferdinand. This therefore means that Ferdinand's support marriage with Isabella meant she was able to win the War of Succession and secure the Spanish crown.

The support of the papacy was also significant because the papal bull that sanctioned the marriage of Isabella and Ferdinand gave them a legitimate claim to the throne. Isabella's claim was strengthened through this legitimacy, enabling her victory to appear legitimate and well-deserved, ~~the~~ which prevented opposition to her rule ~~at~~ upon her ascension to the throne. Moreover, the Pope removed dispensation to Juana's claim to the throne - however, this was done 3 years after Isabella had secured the throne, and is thus of limited importance. It was also, ~~correct~~, Ferdinand who pursued

		<p>papal support by threatening to remove troops from Sicily if the Pope didn't comply, thus making Ferdinand the most important factor.</p>
		<p>Regarding towns, the tierranobles was crucial in providing 400 troops, but this significance is limited in its scale, as Ferdinand provided 40,000 troops, a comparatively larger amount. It was also Ferdinand who secured the support of towns by travelling around Castile to convince them to support Isabella.</p>
		<p>To conclude, Ferdinand's support and marriage was undoubtedly the most important factor. It underpins noble and papal support, and the military importance by military success is clearly important at times tipping points like the Battle of Toro, making Ferdinand.</p>

There was much that could be discussed and Exemplar 2 provides a good example of a Level 6 response. A range of issues are explained and there are judgements made about the issues. This is not a full mark response, because it is less strong at the end. This was given Level 6: 18 marks.

Assessment for learning



Candidates do need to be able support their judgements and explain why a factor/event/issue is the most important. The strongest responses will compare the chosen factor with others and explain why one is more important than another.

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