

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y307/01 Summer 2023 series

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper Y307/01 series overview	4
Section A overview.....	5
Question 1	5
Section B overview.....	12
Question 2*.....	12
Question 3*.....	13
Question 4*.....	14

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 Y307/01 series overview

Y307 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:
- 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.	- 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 significance for England of the defeat of the Armada. [30]

The two passages focused on the significance of the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 for England. Interpretation A put forward the view that victory did not bring Elizabeth popularity and that there were few benefits. On the other hand, Interpretation B put forward the view that Elizabeth achieved her objectives, most importantly safeguarding national independence, but that the costs were high. It is important that candidates take an overview of the interpretations and consider what the view of each interpretation is with regards to the issue in the question and do not simply attempt to evaluate individual phrases, regardless of their link to the actual question.

In evaluating Interpretation A responses considered whether England became harder to govern, pointing to unrest and the demands for higher levels of taxation. Responses also considered that the interpretation was correct in arguing that victory brought few benefits as further Armadas followed and England also had to deal with Tyrone's rebellion, which had Spanish support. However, many responses challenged the view and argued that Elizabeth gained popularity, was seen as a Protestant heroine and that the threat from Spain was diminished and that developments in the Netherlands and France vindicated her actions.

In evaluating Interpretation B most were able to use the increasing cost of the war to show the validity of the interpretation. Stronger responses were able to provide precise figures to support their claim. Responses also argued that Interpretation B was correct as Protestantism in the Netherlands was safeguarded and that the Catholic League were defeated in France, providing further evidence of Elizabeth's success.

These questions do require candidates to evaluate and not simply explain the interpretations, even if they use contextual knowledge to support their explanations. As a result, candidates need to clearly indicate whether they think a particular view is valid, or not, and then use contextual knowledge to support their argument. There were very few responses that drifted into discussing the provenance of the two interpretations, this will gain no credit.

Exemplar 1

1		While traditionally, English historians have argued that the Armada's ^{defeat} was of great significance as a triumph over Catholic Spain, leading to greater expansion to allow for the development of the East India Company and imperialism, modern historians tend to view its significance as lesser. This is a view taken by both Passage A and Passage B: Meryn argues that the defeat of the Armada was not significant as the English failed to monopolise on their success, while Doran argues that it was not significant as Spain continued to ~~attack~~ ^{threaten} England, and as Elizabeth's aims were concerned with defence, no action was taken to threaten Spain. However, Meryn's argument is significantly more convincing in the context of the wider debate, as the Armada was indeed less significant because of English failure to react, rather than ^{the} Spanish threat which in fact, had diminished, as Doran fails to note. In Passage A, Meryn convincingly argues that the Spanish Armada was insignificant because England continued to face aggression without responding actively. Certainly, this argument has merit as Meryn writes that English commanders "criticised Elizabeth's decision to defend the Channel rather than invade Spain." This is evident in December 1588, when Elizabeth agreed to allow Drake to pursue the remnants of the Armada and destroy them, a priority, before turning to ~~in~~ free Portugal, but in April
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		1589, on finding only 5 ships in Coruna, Drake immediately turned to Portugal rather than continuing to seek more ships to destroy. This reveals how the Armada's defeat was less significant as pirates were restrained and respectful towards Elizabeth who prioritised defence, decreasing the strength of England to threaten Spain as only commanders saw it as a key action for English foreign policy. Thus, the strengths of Mervyn's argument can be seen as we see the failure of the English to target ~~defence~~ attack following the Armada showing its insignificance. Mervyn's argument is further persuasive as, unlike Doran, Mervyn considers how "the navy could prey on Spanish shipping" which "hindered the Spanish war effort," showing some consideration of English aggressive action. Indeed, in 1586, Howard's sack of Cadiz may have contributed to Spain going bankrupt in 1597 as they had to sink 30 of their own ships. Yet by acknowledging that Elizabeth went "to war in 1585," Passage A is convincing in revealing how the Armada did not lead to a significant shift in English behaviour - Drake had attacked Cadiz in 1587 prior as well. As no greater action was taken, with result in Portugal failing and Elizabeth prioritising defence, the validity of this passage's view that the Armada was insignificant as Elizabeth did not monopolise her success to threaten Spain more.
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However, there are limitations to Passage A's argument. Merryn writes that the Armada's defeat's "effect was limited". In reality, the Spanish lost 35-44 ships and up to 20,000 sailors, as well as spending so much that Philip had to renege on his bankers three times. The failure of the Armada was thus crushing for Spain, and so it can be seen how the view that the Armada's defeat was insignificant is limited ^{for England}. Merryn also exaggerates in writing that there was "failure to capture, and therefore make profit of, more Spanish ships" in trying to argue that the Armada was insignificant as England did not pursue a more aggressive policy. Rather, from 1588-91, 300 prizes worth £400,000 were captured by piracy. Thus, it can be seen how Merryn's argument is less valid due to exaggeration. Nevertheless, the view is still more convincing than Passage B's: Merryn does acknowledge the benefits of the pirates later in the passage as discussed previously, and he calls the Armada "a great naval victory." ~~not~~ The argument that its impact was still limited is valid in a wider debate as it is true that Elizabeth did not pursue a more aggressive policy through land invasions, rendering the significance of the Armada less.

While Passage B agrees that the Armada's defeat was less significant, it takes the view that

This was due to Spanish attacks continuing rather than English attacks being less aggressive, which is a weaker argument as, as discussed, Spain were less strong following the Armada whereas England were not stronger after, as Murray acknowledges with his note of how "England became harder to govern" with more enemies made, 14th Catholic executed after 1588 in her reign. Doran's view ~~is~~ does still have some merit in noting how there were "two more Spanish armadas" with one of these in 1596 nearly as large as the 1588 fleet, stopped only because of storms. This suggests that the Armada was less significant as a deterrent to Spain: attacks continued, showing the strengths of Doran's view. Additionally, it is written that "The war also spread to Ireland," and indeed, in December 1601, Philip III of Spain had sent many troops to support the Earl of Tyrone at the siege of Kinsale. This suggests that the Armada was not significant as Spain continued to be a threat, showing the strengths of this view, with Passage A also agreeing that "war with Spain continued" after the Armada, conveying the strengths of this interpretation.

However, Passage B is still overall less convincing. It is written that following the Armada, Elizabeth's "objective was achieved" or "Protestant and ~~into~~ national dependence was defeated under

from foreign threats." While this may be true for England, Elizabeth failed to defend Portugal in France. Despite sending £300,000 and 20,000 troops to Henri IV from 1588-95, the Earl of Essex's ineffectiveness led to failure at Rouen, and in 1595, Henri converted to Catholicism. As Doran exaggerates Elizabeth's successes, it can be seen how the view that the Armada had limited significance because of a continued threat is ~~rather~~ less trustworthy, for Elizabeth's defensive aims against Spain were not entirely achieved, suggesting there may have been a shift post-Armada as Spain threw its focus onto France and the Guise Faction. Passage B is also limited in noting "economic and social grievances" caused by Elizabeth's wars with Spain. Doran suggests that this reveals the Armada's insignificance as Elizabeth continued to have to defend against Spanish attack without resources to stop it entirely, but omits the funds collected by pirates. In 1592 alone, £100,000 worth of prize was captured. By omitting the ~~rest of~~ economic gains of the English to emphasise how the Armada's defeat was insignificant as Spain continued to pose a threat, it can be seen how Doran's argument is less convincing than Passage A, as in reality, England was not so weakened ~~as Spain~~ but as Mary II suggest, had different priorities, and Spain did continue to attack England, but failed

		consistently and her non-success in France, revealing the flaws of Darnley's argument.
		On the whole, it is clear that Passage A's interpretation is more convincing than Passage B's. While both are more persuasive than the traditional view that the Armada's defeat was significant in leading to imperial expansion, acknowledging the nuances of the period as Spain continued to attack on England was ^{still} less aggressive, Passage B's arguments that Elizabeth achieved her aims in defence is exaggerated and unconvincing. Rather, Passage A's acknowledgement of Elizabeth's pirates shows a more rounded view of the period, noting that it was failed land expeditions that truly gave the Armada's defeat its significance, as sea battles still occurred, as they did throughout the period. Both ~~passages~~ Passage A note Elizabeth's reluctance to be aggressive, but as Passage B focuses more on Spanish movements which actually failed, it cannot be seen as a more convincing view of the significance of the defeat of the Armada as no Spanish attack was seen a threat to England afterwards.

The exemplar provides an example of a candidate who was able to show a high level of evaluation, using a good range of detailed knowledge to support their argument and reach a supported judgement. As a result, it was placed in Level 6, but at the lower end as both the evaluation and support could have been further developed.

Assessment for learning



Candidate should be made aware that they need to focus on the issue in the question and not simply evaluate all elements in the interpretation. Candidates need to ask themselves what is the view of each passage about the issue raised – in this instance the significance of the defeat of the Armada

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 responses will test a hypothesis and reach a supported judgement.

Question 2*

2* 'Continuity rather than change was the main feature of England's relations with France in the period from 1485 to 1603.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

Although this was a popular question, many candidates struggled to structure an answer and instead often wrote about the factors that influenced English policy towards France. This resulted in a partial answer. Those that did address the demands of the question usually focused on the issue of warfare, arguing that for the first part of the period continuity was the main factor as France was seen as the national enemy and that it resulted in warfare during every monarch's reign, even if under Henry VII that warfare was short-lived. Others suggested that although warfare was a consistent, there were periods of peace, but these were usually short-lived and provided examples of both warfare and peace. In discussing continuity some responses considered how England was always concerned about the Auld Alliance between France and Scotland. In discussing continuity a few responses did refer to concern throughout the period about the control of the Channel and Channel ports, whilst some made reference to the importance of Calais. A number of responses did not consider the latter part of Elizabeth's reign where change seemed more apparent given the withdrawal of French troops from Scotland and the Treaty of Blois. By the latter part of the period relations had changed so that England and France were on the same side fighting Spain, and for those who did consider the whole period this was often the crucial explanation for changing relations.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should be reminded that responses need to cover the whole period.

Question 3*

- 3* 'Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon was the most important turning point in England's relations with Spain in the period from 1485 to 1603.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

It is important that candidates are aware that turning point questions should be tackled in exactly the same way as other thematic questions. A thematic approach provides the best structure and makes a comparative approach much easier. However, most of those who tackled this question adopted an event-by-event approach, considering the divorce and then events such as Treaty of Medina del Campo, Mary's marriage to Philip and the Armada. Most wrote at considerable length on the importance of the divorce, but unfortunately often focused on the process of the divorce rather than its impact on Anglo-Spanish relations. Those that did consider its impact argued it ended the good relations there had been since Medina del Campo and led to the threat of a Catholic crusade against England. Some did see the divorce in its wider context and how it led to England searching for allies, hence the Cleves marriage. Some of the stronger answers argued that the impact was short-lived, as not only did the threat of a crusade recede, but Mary married Philip and restored Anglo-Spanish relations. In considering other possible turning points some discussed English involvement in the Dutch revolt and how that, or attacks on Spanish shipping led to full-scale warfare and the eventual launch of the Armada. In considering Medina del Campo some argued this was the most important as it gave Henry VII international recognition security. However, whichever event was seen as the most important it was vital to compare and reach a supported judgement.

Assessment for learning



Turning point essays require a similar structure to all other thematic essays.

Question 4*

- 4* 'Foreign policy had a serious impact on England's financial affairs throughout the period from 1485 to 1603.' How far do you agree? [25]

Good responses were able to display the crucial skill of synthesis, often comparing the cost of warfare under Henry VIII, Protector Somerset and Elizabeth with the more circumspect policy of Henry VII. The strongest answers were able to support their argument with a good knowledge of the cost of warfare. There was also some discussion as to how foreign policy led to attempts to raise money and created unrest in the reigns of both Henry VII and Henry VIII. The argument of cost was the most frequent feature of responses, some arguing that it virtually bankrupted the country and led to a policy of debasement that would have an impact on inflation. There was also mention that foreign policy resulted in the revenues raised from the Dissolution being spent in order to protect national security. There was also some discussion of trade embargoes under both Henry VII and Elizabeth and how they impacted income.

Most answers did attempt to display balance, arguing national security took precedence over the financial impact, seen most clearly under Elizabeth I. However, some argued that foreign policy was also used by Henry VII and Northumberland to enhance England's financial position and that Elizabeth continued this until she had no choice.

Exemplar 2

4.		It cannot be denied that 'Foreign policy
		had a serious impact on England's financial
		affairs throughout the period from 1485 to 1603.'
		All Tudor monarchs were affected financially
		by the cost of war, with Henry VII and VIII facing

rebellions because of it. Diplomatic foreign policy further affected England's finances, albeit to a lesser extent than war, with England's allies allowing for ~~to be~~ peaceful times when the economy could thrive more easily, as with Henry VI's later foreign policy, or Mary I's with Spain. Naturally, the trading affairs of foreign policy will also have affected England's finances, with the Tudor queens, for example, benefiting their economy through trade expansion.

Firstly, it can be seen that war impacted England's financial affairs, the impact both negative and severe. Both Henry VII and Henry VIII faced rebellions because of the high costs of war: in 1489, the Yorkshire rebellion broke out in response to Henry VII seeking to raise £75,000 to fight France for Brittany, while in 1525, the Amicable Grant led to 10,000 men converging on Lavenham in Suffolk. These public displays of upset reveal the damage to English financial affairs due to both Henry VII and VIII's wars. Indeed, in fighting France and Scotland, Edward VI spent £80,000 on Somerset's expensive garrisoning policy, while Elizabeth I spent £750,000 from ~~£15~~ 1559-60 alone in trying to support Protestants against Mary de Guise. These significant sums of money would have surely affected the economy under Edward VI and Elizabeth I, showing the impact of war. Indeed,

under Henry VIII and Edward VI, coinage was debased to find war: by 1551, a silver coin had $\frac{1}{4}$ silver ~~content~~ content of its 1525 equivalent, the year before Henry VIII began coinage debasement. Both fighting wars against France and Scotland, the impact of war on England's economy is clear. Still, it could be argued that the cost of war was less significant as it was offset through England's loss of land to France, which was not expensive to protect than it was worth. Certainly, from 1514 to 1518, Tournai had cost Henry VIII £40,000 to garrison ^{yearly}, and Calais would have cost Mary I £25,000 to garrison each year. Due to these expenses, it could be argued that the cost of war was offset by the loss of these territories that removed a burden to the English economy under Henry VIII and Mary I. This may show how war did not significantly affect England, for it led to Calais being lost in 1558 and Tournai, captured in war, was also ultimately returned as benefit the Tudor economy. However, this is a weak argument as the expense of taking these territories and holding them in the first place is not considered: the cost of war was not offset by the loss of expensive territories, and war did in fact seriously impact England's finances.

It could be argued that diplomacy affected England's finances, but generally rather more positively. For example, both Henry VI and Mary I

made marriages that strengthened trade with Spain, allowing for the economy to have a boost. Indeed, the 1487 Treaty of Medina del Campo, marrying ~~Henry Tudor (VII)~~ to Arthur to Catherine of Aragon had economic clauses, and in 1555, Philip II helped Mary I write a letter to Tor Juan IV to ~~to~~ ensure the privileges of English merchants in Russia. As Henry VII's custom duties increased from £33,000 to £40,000 over his reign and Mary I's new book of rates released in 1558 led to around 100% increase in custom duties, the benefits of these diplomatic relations to England's financial situation can be seen as more wealth was circulating through peace. Additionally, diplomatic peace decisions, returning territories for payment greatly benefitted England, as under Henry VI, VII and Edward IV. In 1492, Henry VI relinquished his claim to France and was rewarded with 750,000 ecus from ~~Charles VIII~~ the French king, paid in yearly instalments of 50,000 ecus, and in 1550, Boulogne was given up to France for 400,000 ecus. Additionally, Henry VIII gave up Tournai for 600,000 crowns. As these three diplomatic agreements led to increased income, the positive impact of diplomatic foreign policy on English finances can be seen, benefitting Henry VI, VII and Edward greatly. However, there are examples of when diplomatic agreements fell through,

meaning that no funds could be secured, not affecting the English economy. For example, under the 1546 Treaty of Arras, Burgundy was supposed to be returned in 1554 for 2 million écus, and under the April 1559 Treaty of Cateau Cambresis, Calais was to be ~~returned for~~ ^{taken for} 500,000 crowns. As neither of these treaties were realised under Henry VIII and Elizabeth, it can be seen how diplomacy could not affect the English economy so significantly under Edward VI and Elizabeth, as these payment were not materialised. Still, it can be seen that diplomacy led to some positive influence on English finance, and so still had an effect overall.

Trade doubtfully affected England's financial affairs, both negatively and positively. The former even can be seen when trade was halted: in 1528, the Treaty of Amiens led to no trade with the Netherlands, as had occurred under Henry VI in 1485 when Maximilian protected the Pretender Warbeck, and in 1568, Cecil's encouragement of the seizure of a Spanish bullion carrying 400,000 florins, led to another embargo put in place by Spain. As all three monarchs then suffered a lapse in trade, it can be seen how foreign trade ^{with Spain} had the power to change the economy under Henry VI, VIII and Elizabeth I, as ~~the~~ England's finance were reliant on the cloth trade with Antwerp,

given the decline of Cole's as the main staple. Yet it can also be argued that trade had a positive impact on England's financial affairs. This is evident in the exploits of the Tudor queens, Mary I and Elizabeth, who oversaw the founding of companies which greatly benefited merchants. For example, the Muscovy Company was created in 1555, the Levant Company in 1582. As both of these creations led to more diverse trading opportunities, thus helping English merchants, it can be seen how trade affected England's finances positively under Mary and Elizabeth. However, it can be argued that trade did not affect the Tudor economy. It is true that despite facing 200% inflation from 1500 to 1550, England never suffered greatly due to its ability to find new allies when old trading routes collapsed. Indeed, while Edward VI and Elizabeth I's stopping of trade with Spain can be seen negatively as damaging England's finances, in reality, Edward started trade with Morocco and Guinea, and in 1567, Elizabeth backed the Merchant Adventurers in requesting that Hamburg be the new cloth staple for English merchants for 10 years. As both monarchs avoided trade's ^{potential} damaging effect, it can be seen how the view that trade always affected England's finances can be critiqued. Nevertheless, England's financial affairs were still affected by foreign trade as merchants had to navigate new situations - trade was fluid.

4		and this was the Tudor economy, inextricably tied to foreign trading partners.
		To conclude, it is clear that overall foreign policy did seriously impact England's financial affairs, perhaps under Henry VIII the most due to his wars, aided only by brief periods of peace for stability, and a lack of good trading links. Nevertheless, under all monarchs, war affected ~~the~~ the economy negatively, diplomacy tended to benefit it, partly through lack of war, and trade, when good, could affect England's economy positively as under the Tudor queens.

The response below was awarded full marks. It displays a very good level of supporting knowledge, but also shows a high level of synthesis with comparative explanations being offered and a series of supported judgements being reached.

Assessment for learning



Synthesis is crucial for reaching Levels 5 and 6. This does not simply involve a thematic approach, nor stating that issues are similar/different. Candidates need to explain how the issues being discussed are either similar or different. Perhaps thinking in terms of comparing point by point might help.

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