OCR
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GCSE (9–1)

Examiners' report

HISTORY A (EXPLAINING THE MODERN WORLD)

J410

For first teaching in 2016

J410/12 Summer 2022 series

Version 1

Contents

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 responses 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.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

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Paper 12 series overview

Paper 12 is on The English Reformation c.1520–c.1550 with Castles: Form and Function c.1000–1750.

It was clear from the majority of responses that candidates had been well prepared in terms of their knowledge and understanding of the questions. We were extremely impressed with the high standard on this paper. Most candidates attempted all four questions, and very few seemed to have run out of time.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
• kept a focus on the specific question, drawing on their knowledge and linking it back to the question in hand • similarly kept a focus on the date range in the question and selected examples from the correct time period • used their knowledge to develop and explain their points in relation to the question • used source provenance, purpose and their knowledge, applying this to effectively evaluate sources and draw conclusions.	• made general points about the topic (e.g. Reformation or castle development) rather than focusing on the specific question and/or time period • described change without explaining it in relation to the question i.e. why the change happened or the impact of the change • used sources as a stimulus for their knowledge rather than applying their knowledge to understand and/or evaluate the sources • on source questions, used generic or 'stock' comments about the provenance or used context without applying it to the validity of the source.

Section A overview

Candidates had been well prepared for section A on the English Reformation; many showed detailed knowledge of the Reformation in general and the dissolution of the monasteries in particular. The vast majority of candidates attempted both questions and we saw a wide range of responses, across all levels of the mark scheme.

Question 1

The English Reformation c.1520–c.1550

1   Explain the impact of the Reformation on ordinary English churches and parishes between c.1534 and c.1550.   **[10]**

This question allowed candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of the third section of the specification, the impact of the Reformation in English parishes. This question required explanation of impact and candidate responses varied from general points about changes to the fabric of churches and the style of worship, to more detailed explanation of specific changes under Henry VIII and then Edward, such as the Act of 10 Articles, Book of Common Prayer. Both approaches were valid and many achieved Level 3 for an identified impact or Level 4 for an explanation of impact. There was also a good number of candidates achieving Level 5 for an explanation of more than one impact.

Where candidates didn't achieve beyond Level 2, it was because they made general comments or described relevant issues without moving on to explain the impact of changes, for example they focused on why Henry VIII wanted the Reformation or described features of Catholicism before the Reformation. Alternatively, candidates thought the question was about the dissolution of the monasteries and focused their response on the impact on monasteries, monks and nuns. They didn't recognise that the question was focused on the impact in churches and parishes i.e. the specific section of the specification. In the main, these responses remained in Level 2, unless candidates were able to explain the impact on the parish, e.g. taking away support for the poor.

Exemplar 1

nt ideologies For examples, the Act of uniformity ~~Book of common prayer~~ was introduced not long after the Dissolution of Monastero and it encouraged a new format for the Euchavist and transubstantiation, *and promoted the destruction of religious items.* This meant that people were encouraged to hold more ~~point~~ protestant ideologies; and stay away from worship of Mary, the saints. and Purgatory. This, instead, promoted the destruction of Catholic religious items such as religious images or relics., and churches became much simpler and ~~&~~ less displays of wealth. *became* Therefore *because* ~~people~~ of the Reformation, people adopted protestant teachings. and preachings, which left churches

Exemplar 1 identified a clear impact on changes to the format of worship. This was developed to explain how it led to the destruction of images and relics and led to simpler church interiors. The candidate went on to explain another impact.

Assessment for learning

The majority of candidates were confident with the chronology for this question and answered with information relevant to the period. Where candidates did not perform well it was because they didn't develop their responses with explanation or didn't understand the distinction between different aspects and impacts of the Reformation.

It is vital that they understand the latter in order to select appropriate knowledge to answer this question. In addition, candidates who focused purely on description could not achieve the higher levels, no matter how detailed their knowledge.

Question 2

2   Study **Sources A–C**.

'Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries because he wanted to get rid of bad behaviour in the Church.'
How far do **Sources A–C** convince you that this statement is correct?
Use the sources and your knowledge to explain your answer.

[20]

Question 2 has proved challenging for candidates in previous years due to the need to evaluate the sources in order to achieve the higher levels. This year saw some excellent responses to this question with candidates using a range of methods to evaluate the sources and draw conclusions in relation to the statement. It was clear these candidates had been well prepared for the requirements of this question.

Most candidates were able to select appropriate content from the sources and use this to support or challenge the idea that Henry VIII was dissolving the monasteries because he wanted to get rid of bad behaviour. These achieved Levels 2 or 3 for using the content of one, two or three of the sources, linking each to the statement and clearly answering the question. A significant number used all three sources to address the statement, which was excellent to see. Candidate responses included: supporting the statement through Source A, with evidence of monks' sinful behaviour, or selling of false relics; supporting the statement using Source B, with the Abbot's own admission of wrongdoings; and using Source C to argue that this priory was not guilty of bad behaviour but very devout. Alternatively, some candidates used the handing over of lands, rents, etc. in B to argue that Henry VIII was less interested in the behaviour of the monks and more focused on increasing his wealth; others used a similar argument in relation to the offer of money in Source C. A relatively small number of candidates picked out details from the sources but did not relate these to the statement or the question; such responses did not achieve above Level 1.

This question also required candidates to consider how convincing they found the sources. This was undoubtedly more challenging but a good number of candidates did effectively evaluate at least one source using the provenance, purpose or context of the source to argue why it was more or less convincing. Where candidates attempted evaluation but this was *not* effective, they relied on simplistic references to provenance such as (with Source A) 'he was hand-picked by Cromwell so wanted to please him' without explaining why Layton's report would please Cromwell, or what the report was intended to achieve. In some cases, candidates added detailed knowledge to their responses without linking this to the sources, therefore not evaluating the sources to address how convincing they found them.

Some candidates demonstrated very impressive knowledge of the dissolution, but this could only be credited where it was used to evaluate the sources and address the question.

The most successful responses used the purpose, provenance or context to explain how this made the source more or less convincing. Typically, evaluation was focused on Sources A and B. Candidates argued that Source A was not convincing because Layton's purpose, working for Cromwell, was to find evidence to justify the dissolution. As a result, he may have exaggerated or only focused on the very negative aspects of the monastery (some used his tone and language e.g. 'think I have found enough evidence' to support the idea that he was seeking information to justify closing the monastery). With Source B candidates argued it was not convincing based on their knowledge e.g. the Bishop of Furness' involvement in the Pilgrimage of Grace; the risk of being charged with treason and/or the pensions for voluntary dissolution. Candidates used this knowledge and/or the execution of the Abbot of Whalley Abbey to argue this was why Abbot was admitting 'wrongdoings' and supporting the dissolution. For Source C a small number of candidates used their knowledge, such as: the gentry buying monastic land; the importance of the priories to the people and/or the profits Henry made from closure, to argue the source demonstrated Henry's motivation was to gain money, rather than get rid of bad behaviour.

Exemplar 2

King Henry. AS The source was written in 1537, it is likely that this Abbey was worried of closure following the Dissolution of the lesser monasteries in the previous year, so therefore 'voluntarily' closed in order to gain generous pensions for their monks and nuns. The document was signed only a month after a nearby Abbot was executed for the taking part in the Pilgrimage of Grace. Indeed I know that this was lead by Robert Aske in 1536, and involved over 40,000 people. Henry and Cromwell were most likely concerned that a large scale protest would occur again, so wanted to stop this concept through official documents like source B. Therefore, source B cannot be relied upon as it was part of a mutually beneficial agreement between the crown and an Abbey - the Abbey gains generous pensions and the crown gains the land, and can prevent the threat of opposition. As a result, Source B does not convince me that Henry shut monasteries due to bad behaviour in the church.

Exemplar 2 used the content of Source B to evidence support for the statement. The candidate then used their knowledge of the voluntary dissolution and the Pilgrimage of Grace to question the Abbot's motives in confessing the 'wrongdoings' of the abbey. This evaluation of the source was used to draw a conclusion about how convincing it was in relation to the statement. The response had already achieved Level 4 by evaluating Source A; this took the response to Level 5.

Assessment for learning

A greater number of candidates were able to address how convincing the sources were, using valid evaluation of the particular source. Where candidates attempted evaluation but did not do this effectively, they did not move beyond a 'stock' response. Students would benefit from lots of practice to apply such things as the context, purpose and provenance of the source to specifically examine sources in relation to a statement.

It is still the case that some candidates are keen to show their knowledge and it will be helpful to give them practice in applying knowledge to sources in relation to a statement or question. This question is assessing the students' skills in handling contemporary sources so knowledge is only helpful when applied to the sources and question.

Section B overview

Again, it was clear that candidates were well prepared for the questions on Kenilworth Castle and knew the history of the site well. Almost all candidates attempted both questions. However, Question 4 remained the question where most marks were dropped and this is clearly the question where centres could concentrate on helping their students with how to approach the question of utility.

Question 3

Castles: Form and Function c.1000–1750

3 Explain why Kenilworth Castle changed between 1350 and 1500.   **[10]**

This question was a causation question. To get the highest marks, candidates were expected to give one or two reasons for changes to the castle between 1350 and 1500 and support this with examples of the changes that happened, in the time period mentioned in the question.
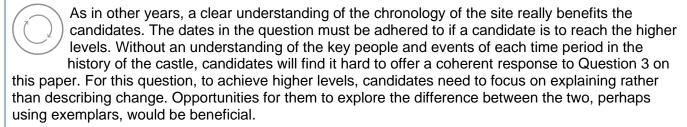
The candidates showed an impressive array of knowledge about the history of the site with most being able to identify several changes over the years and many being able to give reasons for the changes. However, to answer the question appropriately, the candidates' knowledge needs to be selectively used to address the specifics in the question asked.

While there were many high scoring responses, there were others which were limited to Level 1 or 2 for the following reasons:

- The candidates didn't stick to the time period of 1350-1500 and just described changes from any period from 1100 to the 1700s. Where this happened, it tended to be to narrate events surrounding Robert Dudley and Elizabeth I, or Simon de Montfort.

- The candidates mistook a type of change for an actual reason. For example, they said 'it changed because it became a luxurious palace' or 'It changed because it was now used as a home', rather than giving a reason as to why it was possible to make it more homely or more palatial, or the motivation for wanting to do so.

Valid, explained reasons that were most frequently awarded at Level 4 or 5 were: the country was more stable/attack was less likely during this period; new weaponry made medieval defences less effective and so maintaining old style defences was pointless; and John of Gaunt wanted to show off his wealth and status as the son of a king. These explanations on their own would be awarded Level 3, but most candidates who did this much, went on to support the explanations with examples to achieve Level 4 and sometimes Level 5. Such examples included the remodelled apartments and kitchens, or the use of glass windows, or a new hall, built by the same people who had worked on the King's castle at Windsor.

Assessment for learning

As in other years, a clear understanding of the chronology of the site really benefits the candidates. The dates in the question must be adhered to if a candidate is to reach the higher levels. Without an understanding of the key people and events of each time period in the history of the castle, candidates will find it hard to offer a coherent response to Question 3 on this paper. For this question, to achieve higher levels, candidates need to focus on explaining rather than describing change. Opportunities for them to explore the difference between the two, perhaps using exemplars, would be beneficial.

As with the other questions in the paper, it is also important for candidates to be selective in the use of their knowledge. They should apply their knowledge to address the question being asked and not just write a general narrative of the history of the castle.

Question 4

4   Study **Sources D** and **E**.

Which of these sources is more useful to a historian studying the history of Kenilworth Castle from 1500 to 1750?   **[10]**

This was a question about source utility. It was expected that candidates would make inferences from the sources about the period in question, 1500-1750, and support the inference with detail from the source(s). We would also expect candidates to focus on why the sources are useful, not to dismiss them as not being useful.

Many responses were limited to Level 2 because they just asserted that the sources were useful for the information they contained, such as that Source D told us the Brays had been converted to a tiltyard or that E showed the names of the different parts of the castle, such as Leicester's buildings and the tiltyard. To move above Level 2, candidates would need to make a valid inference about the castle from the sources.

The most common valid inference (awarded at Level 3 and above) from Source D was related to the fact that the castle's function had changed and that in the 1500s it was as a status symbol/desirable residence/place of entertainment. Where this inference was made, candidates usually went on to support it using detail from the source to attain Level 4, for example, 'the conversion of the Brays to a tiltyard for jousting tournaments, shows historians that the castle was used more of a place to entertain guests and show off wealth in Dudley's time.'

A mistake that some candidates made with Source D was that, instead of using it to make inferences about the castle, for example how it was used to show off wealth or position, they used it as a springboard to describe the relationship between Elizabeth and Dudley – this was irrelevant to the question.

There were also a number of less successful responses that focused on the reliability of the provenance of Source D. While it is feasible to assert utility because of reliability, this wasn't a very effective way to address this particular question (especially if the argument was that it's not useful because it's not reliable, as most of these candidates did).

Source E was less successfully discussed than Source D. Where candidates were able to make a valid inference from Source E, they typically commented on the fact that it was drawn just before the Slighting and so was one of the last representations of the castle in its entirety, before its destruction in 1649. Alternatively they commented that a historian would be able to see the development of the castle, showing how its function became more residential over the years and citing the large windows in Leicester's buildings as support. These responses achieved Level 3 and above. Some candidates attempted to support these inferences, but attributed details of the castle from before 1500 to the time period in the question. An example of this would be using the detail of Mortimer's Tower from the picture to prove the castle had become less defensive and more residential, which could not be credited for supporting the inference as it is anachronistic.

As in previous years, most candidates seem to believe that pictures of the castle are more useful than written sources, 'because you can see what it looked like'. Ironically this conclusion often came at the end of a response that has made very astute comments about what we can learn from the written source, while giving only superficial comments about the picture source.

Exemplar 3

Source E shows the physical appearance of Kenilworth in 1649, as you can see many of its features such as the great gatehouse and Leicester's buildings. From this we can infer that Kenilworth castle was an important place to many people, as someone has taken the time to draw it and put it in a book of local history. As well as this, it is important to historians as Kenilworth castle was slighted in 1649 for being too defensive, so it shows historians what the castle was like as they can't physically see it now because it is in ruins.

This response achieved Level 2 with the relevant features identified from the source, from the correct time period. There were two valid inferences (the importance of the castle because it was recorded, and the importance to historians to show the physical appearance, as the castle was slighted in 1649). The second inference was supported by the relevant source detail as outlined above.

Advice for centres

As in the previous three questions, it is essential that the candidates read the question carefully, particularly the specifics of the time period involved, and make sure the comments they make address the question being asked. They should be warned against falling back on ahistorical generalisations such as that pictures always tell us more than written sources, or that sources are not useful because they are unreliable. In fact, they should be encouraged to think why an 'unreliable' source might be useful to a historian (for instance, for examining the purpose or tactics of the author).

All candidates should be encouraged to view the sources as a historian would, i.e. what can we work out from these sources? How do they help us?

Candidates would benefit from activities which allow them to practise making inferences from different contemporary sources. For example, centres might get students to explore a range of possible inferences to consider and ask them to apply the inferences, relevantly, to a number of different sources. Such possible inferences could include:

- Historians can infer from the source that castle was important to or valued by the king.
- Historians can infer that the castle was under threat.
- Historians would find the sources useful as evidence about the running of the castle or the roles of the people living in it.
- The source provides evidence about the purpose or function of the castle and how that was carried out.
- The sources provide evidence about changes the castle had undergone.

The guidance in the specification provides a helpful set of prompts to help candidates consider the ways in which sources might be useful as evidence.

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