

**GCSE (9-1)**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY A (EXPLAINING THE MODERN WORLD)**

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**J410**

For first teaching in 2016

**J410/09 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 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.

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## Paper 9 series overview

This paper examines the thematic study of Power: Monarchy and Democracy in Britain, c.1000 to 2014. It requires candidates to display their understanding of change and continuity across a broad sweep of British history, including a significant event. Knowledge is assessed through four questions asking for recall, causation, significance and analysis of an issue over two eras identified in the specification.

The examination focuses on Assessment Objectives 1 and 2; demonstrating knowledge and understanding as well as explaining and analysing historical events.

In order to perform well on the British thematic study, candidates needed to apply their knowledge and understanding to identify and explain the impact of power on Britain. This includes an extended essay that requires the use of examples from across two of the three periods of study. Successful candidates responded well to the challenges the paper presented and had a secure grasp of the chronology. Candidates' learning is examined through questions asking for recall, study of impact, significance, and analysis of an issue over two periods.

Candidates' responses spanned a wide range of ability, they demonstrated an understanding of the 'broad sweep' of this specification. Marks were given across the entire mark range for all four questions.

In Question 1, most candidates were able to identify one of more relevant powers of Anglo-Saxon kings, but additional knowledge required to obtain development marks was less frequently seen.

In Question 2, many candidates were able to go beyond describing reasons for the Civil Wars (using AO1) and constructed explanations linking back to the issue of causation (using AO2).

Many candidates found Question 3 challenging, and a number of highly generalised answers about trade unions were seen, with some candidates writing about how trade improved, which was a clear misconception. Those candidates who possessed detailed knowledge of either the Labour Party or trade unions in this period were frequently able to explain these as a change (for Level 3) and the most able succeeded in assessing their significance (for Level 4).

Question 4 saw a wide range of strong answers from candidates, who were able to use valid examples to both support and challenge the statement in the question.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• showed a clear understanding of the command words and of the demands of the different question types</li> <li>• selected and used specific information about the key areas covered in the questions</li> <li>• selected their examples to match the demands of the questions carefully</li> <li>• managed their time effectively to make sure their responses covered each question with an appropriate level of depth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• omitted one or more questions from their responses</li> <li>• offered material that was of dubious relevance to the questions set</li> <li>• offered entirely narrative or evidence-based responses to Questions 2, 3 and 4 without analysing the issue raised in the question.</li> </ul>

## Question 1

1 Describe **two** powers of Anglo-Saxon kings.

[4]

Candidates who answered this question well, tended to offer two valid powers Anglo-Saxon kings possessed, each followed by a statement exemplifying or developing that power. Full credit was also given for candidates who identified four powers. Most commonly, responses focused on the power to raise armies, control taxation and distribute land. Candidates who could offer some exemplification of these powers (for example a reference to drawing on the population of the 'hundreds' to raise an army) were awarded a development mark.

Candidates' responses covered the full range of marks and the vast majority answered concisely, in the spirit of the question.

### Misconception



Some candidates wrote about kings outside the Anglo-Saxon period – most commonly William I – and material like this was not credited. Centres are advised to make sure that candidates are familiar with terms like 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Tudor' as identified on the specification.

## Question 2

2 Explain why the Civil Wars between Charles I and Parliament started in 1642.

[8]

This question drew on candidates' understanding of a significant portion of the second Key Topic of the specification. It required candidates to identify reasons for the breakdown in relations between Charles and Parliament and analyse their role in the outbreak of civil war. Candidates who could accurately identify those reasons (beyond general commentary) were credited in Level 2, with greater marks given to candidates who could fully explain one (Level 3) or more (Level 4) reasons.

As with Question 1, a wide range of responses were seen that covered the entirety of the mark range of the question. It was impressive to see so many strong responses that used events such as the Grand Remonstrance with confidence. Candidates who were able to analyse the tension caused by the material they deployed were credited as explaining. Some candidates wrongly believed that Charles was Catholic and others were insecure about the nature of 'ship money', but frequently in these responses there was sufficient accurate material to credit candidates elsewhere. Other misconceptions included reference to material relevant to John or James II rather than Charles, and candidates who offered a narrative of the Civil Wars rather than exploring causation could not be credited beyond Level 1.

## Exemplar 1

2	<p>One reason why the Civil Wars began between Charles I and Parliament was due to Charles' refusal to give Parliament <del>any</del> any form of power, and yet demanding they give him taxes or support him in war. <del>An example</del> Parliament's discontent with this fact is seen by their refusal to support him in the war against Scotland (in 1638 he attempted to force the religious changes on them; and was swiftly <sup>denied</sup> rejected with the publication of the National Covenant, rejecting Charles' reformations, and responded by marching an army north, sparking war), which meant that it began to go disastrously - with Newcastle having been captured by the Scots by 1640. Many were also still upset with his personal rule, unhappy that he had been able to reign of his own accord for 11 years, raising money and passing laws (something some MPs, like Edward Coke, claimed was illegal, citing the Magna Carta). Following <del>it</del> They demanded that Charles give them more power (with the Triennial Act meaning Parliament had to be called at least once every three years, and the abolishing of Ship Tax), and when Charles inevitably</p>
	<p>refused - refusing to agree to the 100 critiques and demands of the Grand Remonstrance (as <del>the</del> with demands such as Parliament being able to appoint all of the king's advisors), civil war was inevitable.</p>

This extract from a candidate's answer is a good example of the 'process' of constructing an explanation, though the level of knowledge the candidate uses to support their identified point is highly extensive and such detail is unnecessary. The candidate identifies Charles' actions as a reason for the Civil Wars, provides several instances of these as sources of tension, and then returns to the proposition in the question to show how these made the Civil Wars 'inevitable' following Charles' rejection of the Grand Remonstrance. This part of the candidate's answer was awarded Level 3, 6 marks.

## Assessment for learning



Questions 2, 3 and 4 all require some level of explanation. Responses should use an analytical link back to the proposition in the question. By using some of the language from the question, responses are more focused and offer better explanation.

### Question 3

**3** How significant were mass Trade Unions and the Labour Party in the period 1880 to 1914? [14]

As with previous years, this question required candidates to assess the impact of an event, individual or group. Candidates who were able to explain why mass Trade Unions and the Labour Party caused changes were credited in Level 3, with those who could then assess the significance of that change being awarded in Level 4. Most commonly, candidates attempted to assess the significance of the Labour Party as a turning point, either based around working class representation or legislation like National Insurance, although some of these fell short of a specific analysis of significance.

Alternatively, candidates were able to argue that the subject of the question had limited impact and so was not significant. This was more commonly attempted for mass Trade Unions, for example connected to the Taff Vale judgement, and was a valid route to gaining marks in Levels 3 and 4.

Some candidates went beyond the period to explain long term significance, and this was credited providing the response had initially been rooted in the period specified in the question.

In some cases, responses were too generalised and hard to pin down to specific issues between 1880 and 1914 to credit beyond Level 1; for example candidates who described a trade union but did not make this relevant to the period of the question. Other common mistakes included a belief that the Labour Party formed a government in this period, that the Labour Party and the women's suffrage movement were the same, and that rotten boroughs were abolished in this period.

## Exemplar 2

On one hand, trade unions were very significant as they put pressure on government to pass 1884 reform act and the formation of labor party brought more of the working class into the political nation, a significant transition. ~~These~~ New model unions (such as ASE) had 2 million members by 1884 and were pivotal in the ~~the~~ the Liberals passing the 1884 reform act which increased voting population from 3 million to 5 million. Additionally the emergence of the labor party from TUC unions put pressure on Conservatives and Liberals (particularly the Liberals) to pass the parliament act (1911) and welfare reforms as these

parties were worried of losing votes to the labor party. This Parliament act was significant as it stopped the House of Lords from blocking laws agreed in the House of Commons. This was significant in leveling the playing field and the rights of working class people. It started to remove the social hierarchy. Moreover, the welfare reforms were a pivotal moment in history as it improved conditions and quality of life for ordinary people. National Insurance meant that people could get sick pay or benefits if out of work, while Pensions helped people



could save and have a more prospering life.  
 An almost radical and new & honest,  
 making it very significant.

This candidate's response is a good example of operation in both Levels 3 and 4. The first part of the response establishes an explanation of change based on the pressure placed on existing parties to introduce reform (credited in Level 3), followed by a substantiated comment on the significance of this change based on arguing that the Parliament Act was a turning point (credited in Level 4).

### Question 4\*

4\* 'Between 1000 and 1714, monarchs became less powerful than Parliament.'

How far do you agree?

[24]

Question 4 requires candidates to consider a statement across two of the three study periods and offer explained examples of how the statement could be both supported and challenged. Three explained examples covering both sides of the argument and both time periods gives access to the higher marks in Level 4.

Most candidates showed sound understanding of the demands of the question in terms of arguing both for and against the statement as well as ensuring that examples were taken from different time periods.

Successful candidates were able to use valid examples across the two periods identified in the question to make valid judgements about the relative power of the monarch. Before the 1258 Provisions of Oxford, any valid assessment of the power of the monarch was credited as a valid explanation but after that credit in Level 3 and higher was only given if there was a sense that the monarch's power was being assessed against that of Parliament (or vice versa). This assessment of relative power was the route to Level 3 and higher, and many candidates were successful in doing so.

A wide range of examples were used by candidates reflecting a range of approaches taken by centres, and all valid material was credited. Commonly, candidates used material drawn from William I to show the power of the monarchy at that time, and for John and the Glorious Revolution to show the increasing limitations placed on the monarchy. Candidates could, and did, make reference to Charles I to support or challenge the statement in the question. Some candidates attempted to use Tudor monarchs (typically Henry VII and Elizabeth) to argue that the monarch retained power when compared to Parliament, and if supported by relevant evidence, this was credited.

## Exemplar 3

In the Medieval period, a belief in the Divine Right of Kings allowed the monarch to wield near absolute power - however, there were significant instances in which this was challenged. For example, in 1258 a legion of barons - headed by Simon de Montfort - forced Henry III to sign the Provisions of Oxford, which stipulated the creation of the Privy Council, an advisory council of 24 barons and that Parliament meet at minimum three times per year to oversee the King's appointments. This was significant in the level of oversight and control Parliament gained over the monarch and laid the foundations for the first real Parliament, with two men from each county or borough, to be called by De Montfort after Henry III's imprisonment (overseen even by Parliament) in which further limiting the power of the monarch was discussed and the Magna Carta was reissued.

However, throughout the Medieval period, the monarchy remained the most powerful body in

This paragraph from a candidate's answer demonstrates an effective technique for constructing an explanation within Question 4. The candidate identifies the Provisions of Oxford as an event that saw the lessening of monarchical power in relation to Parliament, provides supporting detail of what the Provisions entailed, and several lines from the bottom of the paragraph makes a valid assessment of the declining power of the monarchy. On its own, this part of the answer was credited in Level 3 (one explanation).

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