

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y318/01 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 Y318/01 series overview

Y318 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. 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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, covered the whole period in a balanced way • adopted a thematic approach • made links and comparisons between aspects of the topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - explained the links and comparisons - supported their arguments with precise and relevant examples • reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question • demonstrated an understanding and familiarity with the different command verbs, e.g. identify, describe, explain and discuss. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 domestic effects of the Crimean War. [30]

The interpretation question was, on the whole, answered well. The majority of candidates were able to access the higher levels by clearly linking their own knowledge to the views and opinions mentioned. At the top end of the mark range, candidates used precise and accurate own knowledge. They explained that Interpretation A argues that effects were predominantly military in nature and thus Alexander II was merely responding to them, whereas Interpretation B argues a wide ranging reform programme was introduced by a committed reformer.

The most successful responses dealt with each interpretation in turn before coming to a measured conclusion. Responses which attempted a thematic approach often were confused and lacked evaluation, leading to an essay-like approach. There was also an increased tendency in this series for some candidates to list the points that each interpretation made before entering into analysis – this often wasted the candidates' time and led to them not completing the paper. Centres should be aware that credit is given in assessing the relative convincingness of the views that are present in each interpretation. Responses which proceeded to list impacts that were not present in each interpretation did not score highly, as they were not explicitly evaluating the view of each historian. This was often highlighted or prefixed by the phrase 'fails to mention'. Candidates should not be evaluating what is not there, but instead focusing on the actual views presented and testing them against historical knowledge. This tendency was more prevalent in this series than in the past.

Centres should also be aware that there is no requirement to mention other historians, nor indeed to evaluate their provenance.

Exemplar 1

Both passages offer differing interpretations on the effect of the Crimean war on Russia. Passage A presents the view that Russia's "defeat in the Crimean war" had "serious consequences" for Russia domestically and that the "state of Russia" would need to be "re-examined" after the war. Passage B offers a different perspective that the reforms passed after the Crimean war were more "promising" with a "range of reforms" being passed to create "fundamental change". Out of the two, Passage A offers the more convincing argument over the domestic effects of the Crimean war as passage B is too positive and suggesting that the majority of ~~positive~~ reforms ~~were~~ passed after the Crimean war had a greater positive impact than they actually did. Passage A offers the more realistic explanation that the majority of the reforms after the Crimean war were purely ~~direct~~ ~~or~~ reactionary reforms in response to a crisis, and ^{that reforms were passed not just in response to Crimea,} ~~the initial impact determined the~~ ~~subsequent~~ but in response to a crisis "all ready to read in Russian politics".

Passage A opens with the view that Russia's "vast military system" had proved "just to be an illusion". This interpretation by Morris can be supported by the devastating effect of the Crimean war on Russia's military with over 450,000 deaths, only 1/5th of which were in war, the rest from disease.

This information would suggest that Russia was not the military power it once was and defeat by the British and Turkish at Crimea outlined newfound weaknesses in the army. Therefore, the interpretation that Russia's military system was just an illusion is ~~supported~~ ^{by} convincing.

Passage A continues ~~with~~ with the idea that Russia was incapable of "equipping troops for modern war" and that Russia had not been able to "muster more than a fraction of her troops" at any one time. This interpretation can be corroborated by the fact that only 4% of Russian soldiers were equipped with long range rifles compared to the 50% of British soldiers. Moreover, ineffective infrastructure in Russia meant that only 60,000 troops could be mobilised at any one time ~~at~~ during the war. Therefore, the idea that Russian soldiers were under supplied and under equipped is convincing. Recognition of these shortcomings are crucial in understanding why the Russian military would need to be "re-examined" ~~and~~ after the Crimean war and that new military reformers like Miliyutin would improve the quality of the army through the introduction of military universities. However, what makes this interpretation most convincing is the idea that a lot of Alex II reforms were in response to a "crisis that was already too real in Russian politics".

This interpretation suggests that the Crimean war was only a catalyst in the series of reforms passed after the Crimean war, and that unrest was already building among serfs towards the tsar. Overall, passage A offers the more convincing argument with no real interpretations to be countered.

Passage B on the other hand is less convincing. Oxley argues that the new local governments "provided new opportunities" for many people "who had not been involved in political life before". Whilst it is certainly true that the creation of the zemstva in 1864 did help increase peasant representation, its effects are not as positive as the interpretation suggests. For the majority of peasants the zemstva was just another organ of government, dominated by the 42% of nobility who made up the zemstva, that the tsar could use to keep control over the peasants. Therefore, the idea that people had more opportunities in politics is limited. Another limitation with this passage was ~~that~~ the idea that the "gentry had lost the legal basis for their control of the peasants". This interpretation is limited by the fact that peasants were still controlled by the mir, even years after emancipation. These mirs prevented peasants from leaving unless they had a valid passport, which

Suggests there was still high degrees of control exercised over the peasantry. Moreover, the redemption payments the peasants needed to pay at 6% interest over 49 years meant the majority of peasants were still burdened to their landowners. Therefore, the idea that the gentry had lost control over the peasantry is unconvincing.

That said, Passage B does have some convincing interpretations. The idea that Alexander had a "deep concern for his people" is true and outlined by the idea that the tsar was seen as the 'little father' to the peasants.

This 'paternalistic' approach the tsar took towards the peasants would suggest that the tsar did indeed have a deep concern for his people which may have been taken into account when passing reforms for the Russian people. Moreover, the idea that reforms "ground to a halt later in the 1860s" is also supported by the fact that Alex II was nearly assassinated in 1866 and after then a series of counter-reforms like increased repression took place.

Therefore, passage B is somewhat convincing, but overall its general impression of the domestic effects of the reforms we are too positive

In conclusion, Passage A offers the more convincing argument as it offers the more realistic interpretation that not only were the reforms passed after ~~the~~ Crimean war more reactionary than liberation, ^{the idea that} the Crimean war was only a catalyst to a crisis already appearing in Russia is also more convincing than the over optimistic view in passage B.

Exemplar 1 was marked in Level 6 and contains excellent knowledge and evaluation. It has sustained judgements at the end of each paragraph and in the conclusion, alongside an appropriate introduction. It could be more consistent in the use of evaluatory words (it often starts each point with one but could develop them further). Its conclusion could also assess each interpretation in greater depth.

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* 'Stalin made greater changes to limitations on personal, political and religious freedoms than any other Russian ruler.' How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1855 to 1964? **[25]**

This was a popular question. Candidates were able to focus on thematic paragraphs that were related to the personal, political and religious freedoms. They had the ability to define the first two as they so wished, but many focused on repression and representation.

At the top end of the mark range, candidates used Stalin at the start of each paragraph before comparing it to two other rulers (in each paragraph). Successful responses were able to compare throughout the paragraph (Stalin made greater changes than x because, while x achieved this, Stalin changed....) and then concluded at the end of the paragraph which time period brought the greatest change. The best conclusions assessed each theme in turn to reach a sustained judgement.

At the lower end of the mark range, candidates wrote about three time periods in total, either chronologically or as factors. Some candidates also neglected the fact that the question mentioned religion and focused on living and working conditions or, more often, the economy as a whole.

Furthermore, centres should be aware that this style of question is not designed to assess whether two events were similar or not; it is about assessing which ruler made the greatest change to limitations on freedoms. Candidates should be encouraged, therefore, to come to a sustained judgement about the importance of the ruler in the question in relation to others; not whether it was similar to them. This was more prevalent this series than either in 2022 or pre-Covid. Finally, candidates who did not cover the whole time period were not able to reach the higher levels.

Exemplar 2

When Stalin came to power after the death of Lenin in 1924 a number of changes were made in regard to limiting the peoples of Russia's personal, political and religious freedom. Whilst it would be true to say that Stalin certainly did more than ^{any other leader} ~~the~~ ~~steps~~ to limit ^{personal} ~~these~~ freedom, ^{due to the severity of measures introduced,} it can be argued that Lenin played the most important role in ^{religious and political} ~~these~~ limitations as it was Lenin who laid the groundwork policies that Stalin would only build on to further limit freedoms.

In terms of political freedoms Stalin did make profound changes. ~~to the~~ Stalin was an extremely paranoid leader so took multiple ~~step~~ steps to ensure his position would not be compromised politically. These changes came at the cost to the political freedom of alot of communist party members. During the 1928 purges opposition from within the party from characters

Like Trotsky, Kamenev, and Zinoviev were all eliminated via ~~execu~~ execution, which was an extreme measure of ~~stating~~ limiting political freedom under Stalin. Moreover, 500,000 members of the Communist Party were expelled due to Stalin's fear of opposition. It can be argued therefore that Stalin did more to limit political freedoms than leaders like the provisional government, who allowed the presence of political parties, and Khrushchev, who did not execute his ~~political~~ political opposition, only removed them from their position, thus giving them somewhat more freedom than Stalin. Therefore, it can be argued that Stalin did limit political freedoms than other Russian rulers.

However, other leaders were also responsible for limiting freedoms politically. Most notably under the tsars, Alex III issued his manifesto on unshakable autocracy to assert his complete autocratic rule in Russia. Moreover, Nicholas II's Fundamental Laws in 1906 also limited political freedoms by giving him the power to dissolve the national assembly (duma), which he would do on 3 occasions, and the power to appoint the members in the duma. However, the argument that the tsars limited the political freedoms more so than Stalin is limited by the idea that the tsars introduced

reforms like the zemstva in 1864 or the October Manifesto in 1905, all of which gave more representation to the Russian population, something that Stalin would not do, therefore ~~meaning~~ showing that he limited freedoms more. Lenin also made profound steps to limit the political freedom of Russians, arguably more so than Stalin. This can be seen by the implementation of the decree on party unity in 1921 which banned all political parties and factions within the Communist party. This decree also centralized the party from the state structure to the ~~the~~ party politburo. These limited political freedoms under Lenin or effectively all political outlets under Lenin were banned, other than the Communist party. These limitations were greater than those under Stalin because they were not only more dramatic at removing all political opposition, they lasted through Stalin's rule meaning he did not have to deal with any external political issues. Therefore, Lenin limited political freedoms the most.

Stalin also made significant limitations in terms of religious freedoms. As a Communist, Stalin despised religion and therefore took steps to limit its influence on the Russian people. The creation of the Union of the Militant Godless

was a key tool in promoting atheism and preaching the greater role ~~of~~ of Stalin. ~~from 1950 to~~ TO FURTHER limit religious freedoms, Stalin closed hundreds of churches, in 1930 there were 224 but by 1936 there were only 16. Stalin's hostile approach to the Jewish religion is also evidence of his limitations to religion. In 1953 hostilities peaked with the 'doctors plot' aimed to liquidize the ^{Jewish} ~~present~~ ~~class~~ religion. It can therefore be said that Stalin did more to limit religious freedoms than ~~people~~ ~~the~~ leaders like Alex II, who was less discriminate by allowing Jews to leave the pale settlement, and the Tsar who allowed freedom of religion and worship in Russia.

However, other leaders ~~also~~ also took significant measures to limit religious freedoms. ~~These~~ ~~notably~~ For example, Khrushchev was very anti-religion, not only did he close 3/4 of Christian churches in Russia during his reign, he also close 50% of churches in Ukraine and reduced the number of clergy by 60%. However, these limitations on freedom are limited by the fact that they are just a continuation of policies under Stalin or Lenin, ~~arguably~~ ~~making~~ these limitations are not dramatically new and therefore are as great as the limitations under Stalin or Lenin. The Tsars Alex III

and Nicholas II also did alot to limit the religious freedoms of Russians. Although the tsars had different ideas on what was tolerable in religion, they both had the same intolerance of religion that wasn't in line with their ideas, and in the case of the tsars anything that wasn't Russian orthodox was not accepted. For example, over 50,000 pagans were converted to Russian orthodoxy and Alex III alone issued 1400 statutes against the freedom of Jews. This is evidence that both Alex III and Nicholas II did profoundly limit religious freedom. However, this limiting of freedom was not as great as under Stalin as atleast under the tsars there was a religion, Russian orthodoxy. Arguably the leader who made the most profound limitations to religion was Lenin. This is because Lenin was the leader who started the ~~the~~ intolerance of religion that Stalin and he would follow. In 1917 Lenin officially detached the church from the state and sold church land to the people. From this point on Stalin and he would only build on the limitations made by Lenin, ~~therefore~~ therefore making him the leader ~~who~~ who made the greatest limitations to religious freedom.

A final aspect of freedom limited under Stalin was personal freedom. As previously stated, Stalin

was extremely paranoid and would take profound measures to limit the personal freedom of Russian people. This is evident through policies like collectivisation which decimated the peasant class. Collectivisation meant that peasants' agriculture produce would be ~~the~~ ordered and collected by the state as well as destroying any private ownership of land. By the 1940's over 98% of peasants were on collective farms with no personal freedom over what to produce, what to sell, or when to work. Personal freedoms were further limited by the severity of use of the secret police under Stalin. As a result of these harsh policies, 1 in 8 Russians were arrested and 40 million were sent to the gulag. It can therefore be argued that Stalin limited the personal freedoms of ~~the~~ the Russian people more than the Tsars and P.G. who were more willing to allow private enterprise and also conducted less severe repression, with the Tsars only willing 14,000 people. Moreover, despite a lot of Stalin's policies just being a continuation of the inhibition of class warfare under Lenin, the scale the repression was elevated to under Stalin was like no other leader. Therefore, Stalin did the most to limit personal freedom.

That said, it must be recognised that other leaders also took measures to limit personal

freedom. For example, Khrushchev's invasion of Hungary in 1956 limited the personal freedom of Hungarians who wanted greater autonomy. Moreover, Khrushchev's continuation of policies like collectivisation also meant the peasants didn't have as much freedom ^{under him} as under the tsars were emancipation in 1861 and the 1906 wages on Stolypin gave them more personal freedoms. Therefore he also limited personal freedoms. However this argument is limited by the fact that he actually did not to impose ^{personal} freedoms of Russia such as increasing grain procurement prices 25% or increasing western influence by allowing foreign medicine. It can also be argued that Lenin did not to limit personal freedom via war communism. Forced grain requisitioning and aiming all industrial output towards the war reduced the freedom of both peasants and workers. However this policy was short lived and replaced by the NEP ^{in 1921} therefore making Stalin the leader who limited ~~the~~ personal freedoms the most.

In conclusion, whilst Stalin was the leader who limited personal freedoms the most, chosen by his paranoia to increase repression to a level like no other leader, in terms of religious and political freedoms Lenin did the most to limit these as he was the leader to lay the policies.

Next Stalin would build off.

Exemplar 2 was marked in Level 5. There is clear comparison and evaluation of at least three examples, and they are compared to Stalin. However, the end of paragraph judgements are assertive, and the conclusion could be more developed to reach a sustained judgement. This response also used economic examples for personal freedoms, which is acceptable as it refers to political and religious freedoms.

Question 3*

3* 'Wars and revolutions always weakened Russian governments in the years from 1855 to 1964.'

How far do you agree?

[25]

This was answered by a large number of candidates. Following the trend of previous series, the majority of candidates approached the question thematically, using, for example, the themes of ideology, government structure and repression.

At the top end of the mark range, candidates assessed three or four wars and revolutions within each paragraph, evaluating the level that they weakened or strengthened Russian government. Finally, responses in the top level contained interim assessments (or end of paragraph judgements) before writing a developed conclusion which contained a clear response to the question.

At the lower end of the mark range candidates approached their answer either chronologically or were unable to compare wars and revolutions within thematic paragraphs. The latter was common, when candidates realised they had to write thematically, but then listed some/all wars/revolutions without comparing why or how they weakened government.

Finally, some candidates did not ascertain the focus of the question and wrote about the economy or societal impacts of wars and revolutions, which was not rewarded.

Assessment for learning



Successful responses grouped two wars/revolutions that weakened Russian government and two that strengthened and compared the reasons why they this was so. This was often using the word 'similarly' to signpost and then explaining the level that they were weakened and why. Responses that were less strong did not develop the response and simply used the word.

Exemplar 3

Wars and revolutions did not 'always weaken authoritarian governments'. Under the Tsars wars and revolutions often did weaken the government under the Communists government was often strengthened by wars and revolutions. This is in terms of their ideology of the government, the opposition the governments faced and the nature of the government.

Wars and revolutions in general in the Tsars generally weakened the government's ideology while it strengthened the Communists. The Crimean War and the Russo Japanese war damaged the Tsarist ideology of Autocracy as these wars were failures and demonstrated weakness in autocracy. The first world war had significant impact on ideology as it caused both the 1917 revolutions which caused drastic changes in ideology. The February revolution caused the ideology of autocracy and monarchy to be overturned along with the Tsarist rule and revolution majorly weakened government. ~~But was so damaging to government ideology that~~ The October revolution similarly caused significant change in ideology as it caused a Communist dictatorship to be installed. The ideological turbulence caused by war between 1853 and 1912 is not seen under the Communists. Both WWII and the civil war strengthened the ideology of a Communist Dictatorship, this was especially the case under Stalin as this he became Supreme General of the

military which strengthened his cult of reverence
 and therefore his ideology greatly. However,
 the Cold War and throughout is more similar
 to the Chinese War and Russo-Japanese War where
 it significantly weakened the ideology of a
 Communist Dictatorship. The Cold War caused
 Russia to be isolated by other Communist powers
 with notably Mao of China which greatly
 damaged Russian Communist ideology to the
 extent it was a main cause for Khrushchev's
 fall from power. Overall, ~~but~~ in terms of
 ideology of the government was not Revolut
 generally weakened government with the exception
 of Lenin and Stalin.

In terms of opposition the government faced
~~two~~ wars and revolutions generally weakened
 government across the period. The Russo-Japanese war
 and the October Revolution were similar as they
 weakened the strengthening Russia's position however
 they both ~~weakened~~ ~~opposition~~ to government
 by causing great opposition. The Russo-Japanese
 war caused in 1905 revolution where 3/4 of the
~~population~~ proletariat went on strike which
 weakened the government so much Nicholas II
 had to publish the October Manifesto. The October
 Revolution caused the Civil War where Lenin
 faced opposition from the ~~left~~ Whites and the Greens
 ended caused an assassination attempt on Lenin.
~~These~~ These are significant as it demonstrates

the weakness of the government. Furthermore, WWI and the Cold War were similar in causing great opposition ~~partly~~, weakening government. WWI caused Nicholas II to be overthrown and the Provisional Government while the Cold War caused Khrushchev to be removed from power. Although WWI was greater in weakening government as there was more opposition, Khrushchev's removal from power further shows that war and revolutions always weakened government. World War Two came as the ~~one~~ exception as it ~~did~~ did not cause significant opposition and caused praise for the government both internally and from foreign powers. This can be seen on Stalingrad being praised as a war hero and Russia's involvement with the allies in WWII and the Tehran meeting. Overall,

it remains true to say that wars and revolutions generally weakened government as they created great opposition.

Wars and revolutions had a great impact and the style of government which the Tsars generally favoured their position but strengthened Communist government. ~~However~~ The Russo-Japanese War caused an increase in repression in the government which had the intention to strengthen but in fact started weakened government. In 1905 200 were killed and 800 wounded in Bloody Sunday, which was prompted by the Russo-Japanese War. This caused strikes and greatly weakened Nicholas II's position. Increased repression weakened government as he seen in China in the Gold War as the brutally demonstrated in the Hunan uprising caused Chen Shou to be accused of being a hypocrite as he denounced strikes and as part caused his downfall for power. However, for Lenin the repression he used during the Civil War caused his government to be weakened, following his assassination attempt 10,000 people were arrested which caused great fear and was a huge deterrent for opposition. During the Provisional Government ^{which was caused by the February revolution} they implemented a major change to reduce repression which gained them popular support as the secret police was banned. However, during the July days ^{due to the constraints of WWI} and the aftermath he puts down of the strike and subsequent arrests 800

Bolsheviks caused his position to be greatly weakened. Their position and contributed to their downfall. Overall, this shows that during war and revolution the style of government interspersed with repression both weakened government.

In conclusion, war and revolution always weakened the Tsar's government and Kerensky's which generally Stolyn and Lenin's ^{government} ~~positions~~ were strengthened by war and revolution, ideology which strengthened government was generally weaker under the Tsar and Kerensky, while it strengthened Lenin and Stalin. Opposition ^{and repression} generally increased due to war and revolution which weakened the Tsar's and Kerensky's government while in general strengthening Lenin and Stalin's.

Exemplar 3 was marked in Level 5. There is clear comparison and evaluation of at least three examples, and there is good synthesis between factors. However, the end of paragraph judgements are assertive, and the conclusion could be more developed to reach a sustained judgement.

Question 4*

4* 'The First World War was the most important event affecting the development of the Russian Empire in the period from 1855 to 1964.' How far do you agree?

[25]

This was a popular question which could have been answered in a wide variety of ways. Some candidates interpreted the question as referring to the development of the nationalities and used the themes of political, economic and social. Others answered the question as if it were focused on Russia itself. Either approach was rewarded, alongside others, but these were the most prevalent.

At the top end, candidates used the First World War at the start of each paragraph before comparing it to two other wars/events/rulers (in each paragraph). Successful responses were able to compare throughout the paragraph (The First World War was more important than x because, while x did y, the First World War did z) and then concluded at the end of the paragraph which event brought the greatest change. The best conclusions assessed each theme in turn to reach a sustained judgement.

At the lower end of the mark range, candidates wrote about three time periods in total, either chronologically or as factors. Some candidates also neglected the First World War and focused on World War Two (which was similar to the 2022 series).

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