

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y317/01 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 Y317/01 series overview

Y317 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:
<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 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. 	<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 origins and causes of the Cultural Revolution. **[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, candidates used precise and accurate own knowledge. They explained that Interpretation A argues that the Cultural Revolution was caused by Mao's fear that China was going down the same path as the Soviet Union, whereas Interpretation B argues the Cultural Revolution was not carefully planned but was caused by the fears of the new generation.

The most successful responses dealt with each interpretation in turn before coming to a measured conclusion. Answers which attempted a thematic approach often were confused and lacked evaluation, leading to an essay-like approach. There was also an increased tendency 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. Answers 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

Taylor and Bickers ~~present~~ ~~the~~ show disagreement in their interpretations of ^{the causes} ~~the~~ origins of ~~started~~ the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Bickers ^{is somewhat convincing in} highlighting the pluralistic nature of the ~~the~~ revolution, ~~isn't~~ claiming that it was driven by the fears ~~of~~ ~~of~~ a wide group of society including children of officials and factory workers. However Taylor presents a more ^{defensible} ~~convincing~~ analysis in his acknowledgement of Mao's significance, as well as ~~the~~ the role the Central Cultural Revolution Group had in the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution. Therefore, Taylor's interpretation of the origins and causes of the Cultural Revolution are more convincing.

~~Taylor~~ Bickers ~~has~~ ~~an~~ argument is ~~perhaps~~ given ^{some} ~~most~~ credibility in his acknowledgement that the Revolution was escalated by the 'real concerns and fears of those who were dissatisfied, ambitious or afraid', which is ~~perhaps~~ arguably a key cause of the violent nature of the Cultural Revolution. Bickers rightly highlights the role of 'younger workers' who he claims fuelled a grassroots uprising in Shanghai. This argument is evidenced by the factional ~~the~~ units set up in Shanghai factories in response to the mobilisation of the Red Guards. This ~~illustrates~~

As ordinary workers felt they were the true representatives of the ~~prolet~~ 'Great Proletarian Revolution'. Undeniably, these workers were central to the escalation of violence in the Cultural Revolution, ~~often~~ with many reports of ~~en~~ fighting ^{and violence} amongst factions. However, Bickers's argument is somewhat undermined by the overemphasis he places on the role of the workers in the origins of the Cultural Revolution. In reality, units of factory workers formed as a response to the uncertainty already created by the Revolution - suggesting they were ~~a~~ less significant ~~in~~ as the cause of the Revolution, and more significant in its development. Therefore, Bickers is right to recognise the role of young workers in the Cultural Revolution, but he overemphasises their role in its origins to an extent.

Bickers however is ^{arguably} more convincing in his analysis of the significance of children of party officials in the ~~regime~~ origins of the Revolution. The youth undeniably formed the basis for the early ~~days~~ months of the ~~the~~ revolution, indicated through the significance of the Red Guards in carrying out violent attacks on the 'five

categories. ~~However~~ ~~that~~ Furthermore, ~~the importance of~~ it is convincing to suggest officials children were central to these Red Guard Units, ~~due to the~~ as ~~Bicks~~ due to the importance of not being 'on the wrong side'. Youths raised by party officials often were raised with revolutionary fervour, indicated by their ~~own~~ occupation of the top jobs in the Red Guards, with many units led by children of CCP officials. However, ~~the~~ Bickers perhaps underemphasises the source of the Red Guards revolutionary fervour. Their violence, such as the ~~the~~ systematic killings of 67,000 in Guangxi, were not merely a manifestation of the Red Guards ambition. Instead, the ^{origins of the} Red Guards were ~~target~~ significantly influenced by Mao, such as at ^{on} the August 18th 1966, where 1 million youths attended Mao's first rally. This clearly represents ~~the~~ ^{a longer term} ~~political~~ indoctrination of the young, ~~etc~~ including ~~those~~ with the children of officials. Therefore, Bickers rightly highlights the role children of party leaders had in causing the Cultural Revolution from their use of violence, but ~~the~~ he underemphasises the origins of their behaviour, that stems back to the party hierarchy and Mao.

On the whole Bickers presentation of the origins and causes of the Cultural Revolution shows some credibility in examining the ~~plurality in the~~ widespread origins of the violence. However, Bickers ~~&~~ clearly underemphasises the long term causes of the dissatisfaction, ambition and fear ~~and~~ amongst the revolutionaries.

Taylor, however, contrasts Bickers in his focus on ~~Mao's~~ the party hierarchy in causing the Revolution, which is largely defensible. Taylor's argument is given some credibility through his acknowledgement of the significance of the 'Great Leap Forward' opening a 'political rift' within the Chinese Communist Party. ~~As~~ There is no doubt that polarisation in the CCP was a central factor to the Revolution's origins. The ~~the~~ Great Leap Forward and Liu and Deng's subsequent attempts to reverse Mao's socialist policy ~~caused~~ ~~a~~ created a significant division between the left of the party, ~~or~~ such as the Gang of Four and the right, such as the Group of Five. Taylor is right to highlight this, as

polarization eventually led to the expulsion of the right wing of the party, ~~such as~~ with the Group of Ten Five being removed in April 1966. In removing the less radical wing of the party, the CCP became radicalised evidenced by the power given to the hardline Central Cultural Revolution Group. Therefore, ~~Buck~~ Taylor's argument is substantiating Taylor's claim that the shift to the left fanned the flames of radicalisation. However, Taylor perhaps underemphasises the role Mao played in orchestrating the internal struggle, ~~such as~~ ~~the~~ ~~indicate~~ evidenced by Mao packing key committees with hardliners in 1965. Therefore, Buck's argument is largely defensible in considering the importance of the internal conflict of the CCP in causing the Cultural Revolution, although he overemphasises the role of party officials in ~~caus~~ creating discourse to some degree.

Taylor however is perhaps most convincing in considering Mao's personal role in the origins of the Cultural Revolution, he claims 'personal

developments of Mao were key in creating the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution, such as the extreme reverence that came to surround Mao. This is largely convincing, as from 1964, Mao ~~had~~ saw a boom in rapid development in his cult of personality, with The Little Red Book selling 740 million copies ~~to~~ from 1964 to 1966. Taylor therefore is largely convincing in attaching significance to Mao's increasing sense of personal rule - complemented by his deification as the son of heaven. However whilst this argument is somewhat undermined by the role Lin Biao ~~he~~ played in orchestrating the cult of Mao, there was undoubtedly a shift in Mao's status leading up to 1966, which facilitated, and encouraged ~~his~~ the start of the Cultural Revolution. Furthermore, Taylor's emphasis on Mao's obsession with the USSR is largely very persuasive. The 1964 fall of Nikita Khrushchev ^{arguably} represented to Mao the significance of ideological ~~regime~~ ~~regime~~, as he blamed the revisionism of the Soviet economy, and Detente for the USSR's decline.

Therefore, ^{Taylor is} ~~it is~~ convincing in ~~at~~ emphasising both Mao's increasing fears over ~~the~~ the CCP's future, and his elevated status as a god-like figure in being the origin of Mao's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Coupled with his acknowledgement of the role the CCP played ~~on the whole~~ Taylor's argument is very convincing.

On balance, it is clear that both interpretations offer somewhat convincing analysis of the Cultural Revolution's causes and origins. Whilst Bickers rightly presents the role of the youths and workers in ^{contributing to} ~~causing~~ the Cultural Revolution, he ^{emphasises} ~~understates the significance of~~ where their views stemmed from - the party hierarchy. Taylor however, is more convincing in acknowledging the role that the CCP played in triggering the Revolution, as well as Mao's role as the Great Helmsman. ~~Altho~~ Overall, it is clear that the authoritarian nature of Mao's China ~~inter~~ undermines ~~that~~ Bickers views of the Revolution being somewhat 'grassroot'. ~~As~~ China's top down structure ~~was~~ was arguably mimicked by the Revolution - ~~stem~~ ~~ing~~ which fundamentally stemmed from the top. Therefore, Taylor's

Interpretation is more convincing than
Bickers on the causes of the Cultural
Revolution. The Revolution ~~was~~
and the culture that inspired it
~~was~~ ~~was~~ was caused by Mao
the highest officials of the CCP,
and ultimately Mao.

Exemplar 1 was awarded Level 6 marks and contains excellent knowledge and evaluation. It has sustained judgements at the end of each paragraph and in the conclusion.

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 answers will test a hypothesis and reach a supported judgement.

Question 2*

2* 'Chinese governments responded effectively to rebellions and internal unrest during the period from 1839 to 1989.' 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 political control, geographical control and violence.

At the top end of the mark range, candidates assessed three or four rulers within each paragraph, evaluating the level of effectiveness in each area. Finally, responses in the top level contained interim assessments (or end of paragraph judgements) before writing a developed conclusion which contained a clear answer to the question.

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

Assessment for learning



Successful answers grouped two effective responses to rebellions and two less effective responses and compared the reasons why they were successful. This was often using the word 'similarly' to signpost. They then explained the level of effective response that resulted. Weaker answers did not develop the response and simply used the word.

Exemplar 2

Through the period 1839 to 1989, overall, Chinese governments grew more effective in their response to rebellions and internal unrest. ~~the~~ The Qing, or Warlord and GMD periods faced ~~as~~ more consistent threats to authority than the Communist rules of Mao and Deng, which arguably demonstrates that Chinese governments were able to use violence and political control to respond to rebellions and unrest. However, the consistent failure to centralise government authority limits the success of response to external revolts, even though it does not take away from the successful implementation of violent and political attempts to secure political control.

Violence was a key method used by governments through the period to curb rebellion and also remove internal threats to ~~public~~ government authority. Consistently, rebellions were suppressed through violence, as demonstrated by the 50 million deaths in the Taiping rebellion 1850-1864 and Jiang Jieshi's suppression of Communist opposition in both the Shanghai massacre 1927 and during World War Two. The success of violence as a method of control is not entirely effective, as despite Jiang's suppression of Communist power he was unable to fully suppress the movement to prevent take over in 1949. The use of violence became more effective under Mao and Deng, building on Jiang's 'Blue Shirt' secret police

force, with the use of party cadres and laogis to remove political opposition and entirely squash it. The lack of internal rebellions through Mao and Deng's rule emphasises the more effective use of violence to suppress rebellion after and before the fact, the number of laogis numbering 5,000 by 1972. While the cultural revolution can be seen as an internal revolt and threat to government authority, it is not a rebellion of the same sort as the double tenth revolution, 1911, as it was driven and controlled by Mao to reassert his own authority. The significant violent suppression in the clearing of the class ranks post the revolution reaffirms the use of violence as an effective response to internal unrest, as mirrored by Deng in his suppression of the Tiananmen Square incident 1989. Thus the use of violence exemplifies the significance of the government's growing ability to effectively deal with internal revolt, using this as a key method of suppression before and after revolt.

Furthermore, political control also became more effectively used through the period as a consistent illustration of government authority to crush internal unrest. Censorship of opposing ideas was key in removing internal threat to authority, especially due to the significance of religious events like the Tiananmen Massacre 1970 and more importantly the Boxer Uprising in severely undermining Qing authority. Both Yuan Shikai and Jiang Jieshi's reaffirmation of Confucianism

(Jiang in the New Life Movement 1934) can be reflected on the use of Communism by Mao and Deng to control the people of China and prevent threat. The restriction of Confucianism drew on ^{the} Chinese past to prevent threat from western ideas of religion or spawning an opposition to the government. This use of ideological censorship was more effectively carried out under Communism, with Mao's Little Red Book 1964 and the cult of Mao, reaffirmed by Deng during the Gang of Four as a scapegoat for the failure of the Cultural Revolution rather than Mao, as it became of central importance to the people of China. Along with the growing use of propaganda, for example Mao's ^{bullet} plays pushing Communist ideology like the 'Legend of the Shining Red Lantern', removed foreign threat to government authority thus preventing political uprisings ~~against~~ against or in line with foreign beliefs. Thus this exemplifies the importance of effective political control to create ideological unity in China to prevent external unrest.

However, the failure of Chinese governments consistently to centralise government authority proved a significant challenge to maintaining government authority. The Taiping rebellion, which ruled outside of Qing authority for 18 years in the Nanjing province, ~~do~~ highlights the geographical challenges to government authority also illustrated by Yuan Shikai's authority breaking down into provincial, warlord control and Jiang's ⁱⁿ ability to control more than 2/3 of China. This problem, attempted

to be solved through Mao's implementation of mass effort and establishing communes, only furthered the fragmentation of government authority, the breakdown of the great leap forward causing rural and urban divide, only furthered by Deng's economic zones and rural displacement. The use of centralisation to improve government authority and prevent internal unrest was consistently combatted with the suppression and removal of democracy. This is seen in the imperialisation of one party, the one party rule of Yuan Shikai and Jiang and the theoretical lack of leader under Deng and Mao. The effectiveness of removing democracy grew in success, but only due to the use of violence and political control to suppress revolt. The significant threat to authority of the Tiananmen square incident demonstrated that western influence of democratic ideas consistently undermines China's lack of autonomy, as also shown in the May 4th movement 1919. Therefore, while centralisation of authority and ^{consistently} increasing removing democracy may demonstrate a more effective method of responding to internal unrest, this only become more successful when aided by the use of violence and political control.

In conclusion, Chinese governments largely effectively responded to rebellions and internal unrest through ability to use violence as both a preventative and responsive measure. Violence was the most consistent method of control ~~by~~ ^{by} its use to quash rebellion.

and instilling fear of further consequences. This became more effective in Mao and Deng's rule using violence and suppression as a long term method to prevent threat to their authority. Political control similarly became more effectively used to indoctrinate belief and obedience to government authority, especially when used in combination with violence as evidence of what opposition could result in, as shown in Mao's hundred flowers campaign 1957. While geographical size and failure to effectively centralise even when avoiding democracy, may limit the effectiveness of China's response to external conflict, the strength of violent and political control emphasises the success of Chinese governments using this to prevent the threat of geographical control.

Exemplar 2 was awarded Level 6 marks. There is clear comparison and evaluation of at least three different examples per paragraph, explaining why they were more or less effective. There are also good end of paragraph judgements and a conclusion.

Question 3*

- 3* 'China's economy was only successful from 1976 to 1989.' How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1839 to 1989? [25]

This was also a popular question. Candidates were able to focus on thematic paragraphs that were related to the economy, predominantly agriculture, industry, finance and/or working conditions.

At the top end of the mark range, candidates used the period of 1976-1989 at the start of each paragraph before comparing it to two other time periods (in each paragraph). Successful responses were able to compare throughout the paragraph. For example, this was a greater period of success than X because while X achieved this, Y achieved this. Followed by a conclusion at the end of the paragraph stating which time period brought the greatest success. 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 was on the economy and wrote about social factors or political change.

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 change. Candidates should be encouraged, therefore, to come to a sustained judgement about the importance of the event 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 3

China's economy saw undeniable success between 1976 to 1989 in trade, agriculture and industry, with Deng achieving significant growth. However, arguably success was achieved prior to 1976, especially surrounding previous developments to industry. However, on the whole, under the Nationalists and the Communist, whilst persistent reforms to agriculture saw some & some degrees of success. Trade further^{more} expanded before 1976, somewhat ~~undermining~~^{arguably} ~~thereby~~ bringing China a degree of economic success. However, it is clear that to a large extent, ~~that~~ it is largely convincing to claim that China's ~~80s~~ economy was only successful from 1976 to 1989, only mitigated

by prior success to industry.

Regarding Agriculture, ~~From~~ 1976 to 1989, was arguably the only period of success for the Chinese government. Deng's ~~own~~ prioritization of agriculture as one of the Four Modernisations in 1982 cemented the focus on agricultural progress, ~~which had~~ This contrasted a lack of ~~the~~ prioritisation of agriculture reforms prior, illustrated by ~~the~~ failure Mao's first Five Year Plan from 1953 to 1957 largely ignoring agriculture, whilst the Qing's Ministry of Agriculture was only short lived, both created in 1898, and disbanded the same year. Deng's focused approach on agriculture yielded significant success, with grain production rising 30% ~~from~~ from 1976 to 1989. In contrast, China's economy saw repeated famines, with the ~~the~~ Great Famine of 1958-1962 killing 35-45 million, whilst the nationalists saw 30 million die between 1934 and 1935. ~~Furthermore,~~ Deng However, whilst Deng clearly saw success in his reforms, arguably the long term precedent for success ~~was~~ began before 1976, as Mao's policy

of collectivisation was the key to Deng's removing China's dependence on subsistence farmers, and was to some extent focused echoed in a Deng's xiangs. Furthermore, Deng's success was perhaps undermined by the short-term farming leases he implemented, which prevented long term investment, thus hindering growth. On balance, it is clear that 1976 to 1989 was the most significant ~~period~~ only ~~the~~ truly successful period in Chinese agriculture, as although reforms had occurred in the past, ~~they~~ ~~some~~ they often had minimal ^{widespread} success, compared to those of Deng.

~~Arguably~~ However, arguably China saw success over more of the period a longer period of time in trade. There is no doubt that Deng's removal of Mao's isolationist policies were significant in creating success for the Chinese economy, with ~~the~~ ~~erec~~ exports increasing 500% under Deng, a reversal of the \$18 million deficit under the Qing due to opium imports.

However, other periods of Chinese history between 1839 and 1989 saw ^{significantly} trade success in trade. Under the Qing, the removal of the tributary system saw trade rapidly expand, such as the 100 trading offices created by the British in Shanghai between 1842 and 1856. Furthermore, during World War Two, the Nationalists saw a surge in trade of weapons and ^{other} military technology. However, regardless of the ^{success} prior to 1976, the true difference in trade under Deng was the sovereignty he was able to claim over Chinese trade. His implementation of Special Economic Zones such as Shenzhen in 1979 mirrored the ~~treaty~~ ports opened under the Qing's Canton system. However, the fundamental divide is that under Deng, China was able to control her trade, ~~retain~~ and no longer was it China see exploitative agreements undermining the profitability of trade, such as the Treaty of Friendship in 1950 that demanded for grain exports during the Great Famine. ~~in~~ Deng 1976-1989 therefore was largely the only period

during which China saw true ^{economic} success
in ~~the~~ trading.

~~However, the most sign~~ Arguably
Industry ^{however} saw ^{more} the most long term success
in China between 1939 and 1989,
undermining the view that ~~it~~ only after
1976 was the economy successful.
Deng's ~~reforms~~ ^{reforms} undeniably increased
the success of industry, implementing
Western technology ~~to~~ and ^{increased} ~~increased~~
decentralisation in order to create an
efficient industrial sector, in line with
~~the~~ the principle of industry in the Four
Modernisations. However, arguably Deng's
the success after 1976 merely echoed

the patterns of an increasingly industrialised China prior to Deng's westernisations were mirrored the Nationalists, who through ~~the~~ subsidisation from the National Resources Commission (1932) saw huge success in fashion and film. Meanwhile Mao, had seen perhaps contrasting success in heavy industry, with output rising 18.7% under the First Five Year Plan. This is perhaps symbolic of a shift in Chinese industry towards the later half of the period, where ~~there~~ China saw an increased focus on industry, even prior to 1976. However, the level of success under Deng ~~was~~ no doubt more significant than that of Mao or the Nationalist. Deng's true success in industry stemmed from other fields. The improvements in agriculture drove a pattern of urbanisation, boosting the urban workforce, whilst the increased trade drove output through facilitating high levels of demand. Meanwhile Deng's shift to a more ~~or~~ ~~less~~ pragmatic education style included an aim of having 4 million technical students, further enabling productivity. Therefore, it is clear that ^{China} Deng saw

the most ~~economic~~ ^{industrial} success after 1976 is due to Deng's modernisations, although it was not the only period of success, as Mao and Jiang Jieshi also saw periods of industrial development.

On balance, the claim that China's economy was only successful from 1976 to 1989 is largely convincing. ~~It is clear~~ There is a clear distinction in China's agricultural sector and trade levels ~~after~~ before and after 1976, with prior attempts at development failing to have as wide an impact as Deng's policies. However, in industry, early periods no doubt saw some level of success in increasing and diversifying output. However, it is clear that Deng's ^{in industry} was ~~more~~ still more successful due to the comprehensive nature of his progress, with agriculture, ~~and~~ trade and education proving key to ~~the~~ ^{China's} industrial growth. Therefore ~~as~~ China's economy was ~~not~~ largely only successful from 1976 to 1989 due to the ~~also~~ large scale of

reforms undertaken by Deng, to an extent that was unprecedented prior.

Exemplar 3 was awarded Level 6 marks. There is clear comparison and evaluation of at least three examples, and they are compared to the time frame in the question. There are also good end of paragraph judgements (please note that paragraph 1 is an assertion) and a conclusion. This response could have been more definitive in its argument and, on occasion, not argued chronologically.

Question 4*

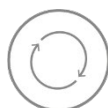
4* 'China's attitude to the wider world during the period 1839 to 1989 was always defensive.' How far do you agree? [25]

Following the trend of previous series, most candidates approached the question thematically, using, for example, different countries as their themes. This did hinder some candidates as they were unable to reach good levels of synthesis. The approach was correct, but there needed to be comparison across the time periods as to how and why China's attitude changed, not just simply exploring it chronologically.

At the top end of the mark range, candidates assessed three or four rulers within each paragraph, evaluating the level of defensiveness in each area. Finally, responses in the top level contained interim assessments (or end of paragraph judgements) before writing a developed conclusion which contained a clear answer to the question.

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

Assessment for learning



Successful responses grouped two time periods when the attitude was defensive and two time periods/rulers when it was not. This was often using the word "similarly" to signpost and then explained the level of defensiveness. Weaker answers did not develop the response and simply used the word.

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