

GCSE (9–1)

Examiners' report

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

J410

For first teaching in 2016

J410/13 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 13 series overview

Candidates were well-prepared for this depth study on Personal Rule to Restoration with Castles Form and Function. They were able show a commendable level of knowledge and understanding, which they deployed well to address the questions asked. The range and quality of responses varied but the vast majority of candidates attempted all four questions, and very few seemed to have run out of time.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressed the question in the first few lines of their answer • focused on the date range in the question and used their knowledge relevant to it • identified a point in response to the question and developed it with appropriate knowledge, specific and relevant to the question • explained how their knowledge answered the question by linking back or when introducing new factual detail • on source Questions (2 and 4) used quotes (or paraphrased) to make their answers more focused • evaluated sources by discussing the purpose of the author of the source in the context that they were written. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • didn't clearly refer to the question when answering • gave answers which were outside of the date range stipulated in the question • gave 'headline' answers to the question without developing the explanation with relevant knowledge • showed a lot of historical knowledge, without making it relevant to the question being asked • didn't delineate different points in response to the question, making the answers less fluent and the argument being made, less clear • responded to source based questions by using knowledge about the topic but without using the sources themselves (therefore not addressing the question) • tried to evaluate sources by just giving related contextual knowledge, but without using this knowledge to discuss the validity of the source.

Section A overview

Responses to the two questions on Personal Rule to Restoration showed a very impressive level of knowledge and understanding of the period. However, this knowledge wasn't always deployed appropriately and so many candidates lost marks because they didn't make this knowledge relevant to the question being asked. Many candidates were more comfortable with the source based question and so chose to answer Question 2 first.

The majority of responses made effective use of the sources to say that they supported or did not support the statement (to achieve Level 2 or 3 answers). However, developed evaluation of the sources in Question 2 (needed for Levels 4 and 5), remains a significant challenge for candidates. This should be an area for centres to focus on to support their students.

Question 1

Personal Rule to Restoration 1629–1660

- 1 Explain the impact of Cromwell on the government of England between 1653 and 1658. [10]

The focus of the question was 'impact', so candidates were expected to go beyond just describing what happened. They needed to explain the *effect* of Cromwell's actions and policies on the government or on the people he governed. The question also asks specifically about the period 1653-1658, so answers which discussed Cromwell's actions and policies before this time were outside the period.

Those candidates who reached Level 4 or 5 typically did so by discussing Cromwell's use of the Major Generals (and how their governance affected the lives of ordinary people, leading to dissatisfaction among the public) and Cromwell's interference with Parliament leading to instability or a more dictatorial approach to government (See exemplar 1). It should be noted, as in other years, that these explanations needed to clearly address the question to get into Levels 3, 4 or 5. Some candidates did show good knowledge of the above, but without giving an indication of the impact it had.

Where candidates did not move beyond Level 2, it was usually because they described highlights of Cromwell's rule. For instance, 'he dissolved the rump parliament' or 'he set up the Major Generals' but did not explain what these things meant or how they impacted the government or the lives of ordinary people

This question does seem to have confused some candidates, who did not know how to approach the question of 'impact'. This meant there were a lot of quite limited answers which just described generalities about Cromwell, many of which could not be given above a Level 1 because they referred to events outside the time period or because they did not address the question.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should be reminded to stick to the dates and wording of the question, to direct their answer appropriately. They should be reminded that when their knowledge is used only to describe events, no matter how detailed, it will not be rewarded at the highest levels if it is not used to answer the question set.

Exemplar 1

Another way in which ~~the~~ Cromwell impacted the government was in 1659 when he introduced the Rule of the Major Generals, dividing the country into 11 states to be ruled individually by his closest and most powerful advisors and the New Model Army. The abusive and controlling leadership completely ~~is~~ went against democracy and resembled that of a military led dictatorship. This was impactful because its instability and extreme ~~of~~ unpopularity proved the need for a monarchy in England to restore structure and peace, and ~~its~~ failure further strengthened the power ~~of~~ and popularity of democracy and the monarchy in England.

This response clearly identifies an impact of Cromwell on the government of England in the correct time period (1653-1658). It then explains the reason, using valid, specific knowledge of events. The candidate had already identified and explained a valid point in a similar style and so achieved Level 5/10 marks for the total response.

Question 2

2 Study Sources A–C.

'Between 1641 and 1642, Parliament was more opposed to Charles' advisors than to Charles himself.'

How far do **Sources A–C** convince you that this statement is correct?

Use the sources and your knowledge to explain your answer.

[20]

() Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology

[5]

Candidates knew to discuss each of the three sources separately and that the vast majority very specifically addressed the question when discussing each source in turn. This meant the majority were able to achieve at least Level 2 or 3. There were very few who did not reach at least Level 2.

Most candidates recognised that Source A supported the statement, typically quoting the description of Charles' advisors as being 'wicked'. Alternatively, some candidates argued that it didn't support the statement because Dering was criticising the Remonstrance and Parliament for writing the Remonstrance. Either approach was valid.

Of the three sources, Source B was less well understood. The typical (valid) approach was to argue that, since the charges against the five members related to treason against the King himself, this meant the source did not support the statement. However, a number of candidates misunderstood the source and thought 'the five members' referred to Charles' advisors. This led them to incorrectly argue that it proved the advisors were to blame 'because they tried to deprive the King of his royal power'.

Source C was generally well understood. Candidates typically quoted 'wicked advice of Papists' to argue that the source supported the statement.

In order to reach Level 4 or Level 5, candidates were required to consider how 'convincing' they found the sources in relation to the statement and so had to evaluate the sources in a valid way. This continues to be the most challenging area for candidates. Most tried to evaluate, but did so using 'stock' responses, for instance saying (about Source A) that since Sir Edward Dering was a royalist during the war, he must have been biased. For Source B saying that the King 'might have made up the charges'. Such responses didn't try to explain further.

There were also candidates who used the sources as a prompt to show off their knowledge of the period. However, while the range and depth of this knowledge was often impressive, it was not effectively used to evaluate the source(s) as required by the question.

The most successful candidates addressed the precise purpose, motivation or context of one or more of the sources, in order to address the question of how convincing they were about the statement.

Typically, these candidates argued that: Source A was not convincing because Dering was trying to persuade other MPs to vote against the Remonstrance and so was putting blame on the advisors to exonerate the King. Source B was not particularly convincing since the King would want to justify his outrageous action of breaking parliamentary privilege by making the 'crimes' suitably serious. In Source C, the authors of the Militia Ordinance worded it like this in order to win people onto their side by saying their actions were against the advisors with the intention of protecting the King.

The examples given here all say they were 'not convincing'. Candidates could, of course, argue they were convincing, for instance by corroborating what the source said with relevant knowledge. These responses were rewarded at Level 4 or 5.

Assessment for learning



It would be advisable for candidates to have regular practice in handling contemporary sources and in exploring how to use the sources as evidence to address a particular statement or question. Responses which evaluate sources in a 'stock' way ('he's biased so it is not convincing...') are unlikely to achieve the higher levels in this question.

It would be beneficial for students to consider the purpose or motivation of the author(s), and to think about what outcome the author might expect in response.

Candidates also need to recognise that where contextual knowledge is employed, it needs to be used selectively, to argue whether sources are convincing or not about this particular question, not just to display what they know about the topic.

Section B overview

It was clear that candidates knew the history of the site well. They showed a good level of knowledge about the development of Kenilworth Castle through the different time periods. Almost all candidates attempted both questions.

Question 3

Castles: Form and Function c.1000–1750

3 Explain why Kenilworth Castle changed between c.1150 and c.1270.

[10]

This was a question of causation. For the highest marks, candidates were expected to give two distinct reasons for changes in the specified time period (1150-1270) and to support this with relevant developments of the castle related to these reasons.

Candidates showed a good level of knowledge about Kenilworth and, as well as being able to describe the features of the castle in great detail and accuracy, they showed a good understanding of how the function of the castle had changed over time in response to the changing political and social landscape of the time.

Most candidates were able to describe the different additions to the castle in the time period and many could explain the need for these changes (typically, threats to Henry II from his sons and threats to King John from the Barons or the papal interdict, creating a need for greater security), see Exemplar 2.

However, some candidates' answers were limited for a number of reasons. Many described events/features from before or after the period stated in the question. Quite often the first point made was to do with the de Clintons and Henry I and the second point about King John's changes and reasons for them. So, a large number of responses were able to reach Level 3 or Level 4 but couldn't reach Level 5 because their first point wasn't addressing the question/time period appropriately. Some responses discussed the castle becoming a palace because there was no longer any need for a fortress. These responses were also not valid as they were describing changes outside of the stipulated time period.

Some candidates could not get higher than Level 2 because, although they could identify features from the time, they did not give sufficient explanation of why, tending to give simplistic reasons like 'to be safer' or 'for defence'.

Many candidates described the Siege of 1266, but simply gave a narrative of events, without using it to address the question

There was a small number of candidates who just described aspects that could be about any castle at any time 'they built walls', 'they put it on a hill' 'it had battlements' and so on which could describe any castle at any time so couldn't be given higher than a Level 1.

Assessment for learning



A clear understanding of the chronology of the site really benefits the candidates. This helps them select the correct features and changes from that time. Without an understanding of the key people and events and changes of each time period, candidates will find it hard to offer a coherent response to Question 3. It is also important for candidates to be selective in the use of their knowledge and to apply it to the question being asked, rather than use it to write a general narrative of the history of the castle.

Exemplar 2

Kenilworth from 1174-1244, an outer layer of stone walls were added as well as a dam to control water defences. Kenilworth changed to this because also mortimer towers were created, Kenilworth changed to this because towers were built as a strengthening programme. This is due to the king being wary of the Nobles, because in the past King John was in a civil war against them which ultimately caused the magna carta to be signed. Also these changes occurred due to him being scared of assassination by being excommunicated by the pope. This shows that why Kenilworth change between 1174-1244 and 1244 because it changed due to threats of being assassinated.

This response identifies changes that King John made to the castle and then explains why he needed to reinforce the defences. The motivation is clearly explained (referring to the barons' war, the papal interdict and fear of assassination) The changes that are described illustrate the given reason very clearly, and are from the correct time period, so the response achieves Level 4 at this point.

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 c.1300 to c.1750?

[10]

Candidates were expected to explore the utility of sources D and E, for understanding aspects of the castle in the particular time period, 1300-1750. Examiners were looking for valid inferences from each source supported by details from the sources.

Source D was addressed particularly well. Candidates most typically remarked on the fact that John of Gaunt had paid for repairs to the floor of the Great Chamber 'so that dancing can take place at Christmas'. They used this to support the inference that the castle was being used as a palatial home and status symbol and connected this to their understanding of the time; that the country was going through a period of relative peace with little need for a fortress, see Exemplar 3.

Source E proved to be more of a stumbling block. There was a tendency for candidates to state that, since the source was a 'visual representation', it was inherently useful, but without being able to explain why that might be. However, more successful responses commented on the Elizabethan garden visible in the photograph, and used this as evidence to support the inference that the castle was used by Dudley as a status symbol.

There were many responses which couldn't get higher than L2 because they asserted the value of extracts from the sources, but they hadn't made a valid inference; what could we infer about the castle from these extracts?

Some candidates dismissed one or both sources as 'useless' either because 'it doesn't tell you everything about the whole period' or because 'it's a modern photo so can't tell us about the past'. However, these responses were very much in the minority.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should be reminded to read the question carefully, particularly the specifics of the time period involved, and to make sure their responses address the question being asked. They should be warned against falling back on generalisations.

OCR support



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. 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?

Such possible inferences could include:

- Historians can infer that the castle was under threat.
- Historians can infer the importance important people placed on the castle at that time.
- Historians can infer from the source that the castle was no longer needed for defence.
- 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.
- The sources provide evidence about changes the castle had undergone.

Exemplar 3

4	<p>Source D is useful to a historian studying the history of Kenilworth Castle as it demonstrates the changes over time. In the source it refers to a "Great Chamber" and "new buildings". All of these developments were palatial and due to the settled and stable context of the time. By looking at the precedence we can see it was with the an account of the the spending of the Lancasters, who developed the castle as when it was a symbol of wealth and power power. Therefore the source is useful as it shows developments</p>
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This response selects an extract from Source D and uses it to support a valid inference that the function of the castle was changing (becoming 'palatial' and a 'status symbol'). This is well explained and so achieved Level 4 at this point.

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