

3 Assessment of OCR A Level in History A

3a. Forms of assessment

OCR's A Level in History A consists of three units that are externally assessed and one unit that is assessed by the centre and externally moderated by OCR.

Unit group 1: British period study and enquiry

These units are assessed in two parts: the enquiry and the period study, and thus the question paper has two sections.

Section A is the enquiry. Learners will answer one compulsory question, requiring them to analyse and evaluate four primary sources in their historical context in order to test a hypothesis. This part of the paper is worth 30 marks.

Section B is the period study. Learners will answer one essay question from a choice of two. This part of the paper is worth 20 marks.

Unit group 2: Non-British period study

Learners will answer one two-part question from a choice of two.

The first part of the question will require learners to compare two factors and to make a judgement about their relative importance. There are 10 marks available.

For the second part of the question learners will write an essay on a different part of the period. As with the British period study essay in unit group 1, this question is worth 20 marks.

Unit group 3: Thematic study and historical interpretations

Assessment of units in this unit group is in two parts: the historical interpretations depth study and the

thematic essay, and thus the question paper has two parts.

Section A is the interpretations section. Learners will read two extracts from historians about one of the three depth studies specified for their chosen option, and will write an essay explaining which they think is more convincing. This part of the paper is worth 30 marks.

Section B is the themes section. Learners will answer two themes questions from a choice of three, each of which requires an essay covering the whole period studied. This part of the paper is worth 50 marks.

Unit Y100: Topic based essay

An extended essay of 3000–4000 words, arising from independent study and research, on a topic of the learner's choice.

Planning of the task

It is expected that the teacher will provide detailed guidance to learners in relation to the purpose and requirement of the task. The teacher should ensure that learners are clear about the assessment criteria which they are expected to meet and the skills which they need to demonstrate in the task. Any explanation or interpretation given by teachers must be general and not specific to learners' work.

Further guidance about the nature of advice that teachers can give to learners can be found in the JCQ *Instructions for conducting coursework*.

3b. Assessment objectives (AOs)

There are three assessment objectives in OCR’s A Level in History A. These are detailed in the table below. Learners are expected to demonstrate their ability to:

	Assessment Objective
AO1	Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.
AO2	Analyse and evaluate appropriate source materials, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within its historical context.
AO3	Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted.

AO weightings in A level in History A

The relationship between the assessment objectives and the units/unit groups are shown in the following table:

Units	% of A Level				
	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Total
British period study and enquiry (Unit group 1) <i>(Units Y101 to Y113)</i>	10%	15%			25%
Non-British period study (Unit group 2) <i>(Units Y201 to Y224)</i>	15%				15%
Thematic study and historical interpretations (Unit group 3) <i>(Units Y301 to Y321)</i>	25%		15%		40%
Topic based essay <i>(Unit Y100)</i>	10%	5%	5%		20%
	60%	20%	20%		100%

3c. Total qualification time

Total qualification time (TQT) is the total amount of time, in hours, expected to be spent by a learner to achieve a qualification. It includes both guided learning hours and hours spent in preparation, study, and

assessment. The total qualification time for A Level in History A is 360 hours. The total guided learning time is 360 hours.

3d. Assessment availability

There will be one examination series available each year in May/June to all learners. This specification will

be certified from the June 2017 examination series onwards.

3e. Retaking the qualification

Learners can retake the qualification as many times as they wish. Learners must retake all examined components but they can choose to either retake the

non-exam assessment (NEA) or carry forward (re-use) their most recent result (see Section 4d).

3f. Assessment of extended response

The assessment materials for this qualification provide learners with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning and marks for extended responses are

integrated into the marking criteria. All externally assessed units include the assessment of extended responses.

3g. Non exam assessment: Unit Y100 Topic based essay – Non exam assessment guidance

Planning of the task

It is expected that the teacher will provide detailed guidance to learners in relation to the purpose and requirement of the task. The teacher should ensure that learners are clear about the assessment criteria which they are expected to meet and the skills which they need to demonstrate in the task. Any explanation or interpretation given by teachers must be general and not specific to learners' work.

First draft

What teachers can do:

Teachers may review work before it is handed in for final assessment. Advice must remain at the general level, enabling candidates to take the initiative in making amendments. One review should be sufficient to enable learners to understand the demands of the assessment criteria.

What teachers cannot do:

Teachers may not give detailed advice and suggestions as to how the work may be improved in order to meet the assessment criteria. This includes indicating errors or omissions and intervening to improve the presentation or content of the work.

Further guidance about the nature of advice that teachers can give to learners can be found in the JCQ *Instructions for conducting coursework*.

Marking

Marking should be positive, rewarding achievement rather than penalising failure or omissions. The awarding of marks must be directly related to the marking criteria in the relevant table. Teachers should use their professional judgement in selecting level descriptors that best describe the work of the learner to place them in the appropriate level for each assessment objective. Teachers should use the full range of marks available to them and award full marks in any level for which work fully meets that descriptor. Teachers must clearly show how the marks have been awarded in relation to the marking criteria.

A combination of the following approaches should be adopted:

- summary comments either on the work (usually at the end) or on a cover sheet
- key pieces of evidence flagged throughout the work by annotation in the margin.

Indications as to how marks have been awarded should:

- be clear and unambiguous
- be appropriate to the nature and form of the work
- facilitate the standardisation of marking within the centre to enable the moderator to check the application of the assessment criteria to the marking.

Final submission

Centres must carry out internal standardisation to ensure that marks awarded by different teachers are accurate and consistent across all candidates entered for Unit Y100. In order to help set the standard of marking, centres should use exemplar material provided by OCR, or, where available, work in the centre from the previous year.

Prior to marking the whole cohort, teachers should mark the same small sample of work to allow for the comparison of marking standards.

Where work for Unit Y100 has been marked by more than one teacher in a centre, standardisation of marking should normally be carried out according to one of the following procedures:

- **either** a sample of work which has been marked by each teacher is remarked by the teacher who is in charge of internal standardisation
- **or** all the teachers responsible for marking Unit Y100 exchange some marked work, (preferably at a meeting led by the teacher in charge of

internal standardisation) and compare their marking standards.

Where standards are found to be inconsistent, the relevant teacher(s) should make adjustment to their marks or re-consider the marks of all learners for whom they were responsible.

If centres are working together in a consortium, they must carry out internal standardisation of marking across the consortium. Centres should retain evidence that internal standardisation has been carried out.

A clear distinction must be drawn between any interim review of non exam assessment and final assessment for the intended examination series. Once work is submitted for final assessment it must not be revised. Under no circumstances are 'fair copies' of marked work allowed. Adding or removing any material to or from non exam assessment after it has been presented by a learner for final assessment will constitute malpractice.

If a learner requires additional assistance in order to demonstrate aspects of the assessment, the teacher must award a mark which represents the learner's unaided achievement.

3h. Non exam assessment: Unit Y100 Topic based essay – Marking Criteria

To select the most appropriate mark within the band descriptor, teachers should use the following guidance:

- o where the candidate's work convincingly meets the criteria, the highest mark should be awarded
- o where the candidate's work adequately meets the criteria, the most appropriate mark in the middle range should be awarded
- o where the candidate's work just meets the criteria, the lowest mark should be awarded.

Teachers should use the full range of marks available to them and award full marks in any band for work which fully meets that descriptor. Where there are only two marks within a band the choice will be between work which, in most respects, meets the criteria and work which just meets the criteria. For wider mark bands the marks on either side of the middle mark(s) for 'adequately met' should be used where the standard is lower or higher than 'adequate' but not the highest or lowest mark in the band.

Internal assessment marking grid

Level	AO1	AO2	AO3
6	<p>17–20</p> <p>There is a consistent focus on the question throughout the answer. Detailed, accurate and fully relevant knowledge and understanding is used to effectively analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to produce a clear and well-supported argument which reaches a convincing and substantiated judgement.</p>	<p>9–10</p> <p>The answer has excellent evaluation of a fully appropriate range of different sources that are primary and/or contemporary to the period. The answer demonstrate the candidate's own full engagement with the sources, using detailed and accurate knowledge in order to produce a well-supported analysis of them within their historical context.</p>	<p>9–10</p> <p>The answer has excellent evaluation of a fully appropriate range of different interpretations of the historical issue chosen, using detailed and accurate knowledge of the historical context in order to produce a well-supported analysis of the interpretations and to locate them effectively within the wider historical debate on the issue.</p>
5	<p>13–16</p> <p>There is a focus on the question throughout the answer. Generally detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to produce a supported argument which reaches a reasonable and substantiated judgement.</p>	<p>7–8</p> <p>The answer has very good evaluation of an appropriate range of different sources that are primary and/or contemporary to the period. The answer demonstrates the candidate's own engagement with the sources, using relevant knowledge in order to produce a supported analysis of them within their historical context.</p>	<p>7–8</p> <p>The answer has very good evaluation of an appropriate range of different interpretations of the historical issue chosen, using relevant knowledge of the historical context in order to produce a supported analysis of the interpretations and to locate them within the wider historical debate on the issue.</p>
4	<p>10–12</p> <p>The majority of the answer is focused on the question. Generally accurate and sometimes detailed relevant knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to produce an argument which reaches a reasonable, supported judgement.</p>	<p>5–6</p> <p>The answer has good evaluation of a range of different sources that are primary and/or contemporary to the period. The answer demonstrates the candidate's own engagement with the sources, using generally relevant knowledge in order to produce an analysis of them within their historical context.</p>	<p>5–6</p> <p>The answer has good evaluation of a range of different interpretations of the historical issue chosen, using generally relevant knowledge of the historical context in order to produce an analysis of the interpretations and to locate them within the wider historical debate on the issue.</p>

3	7–9 The answer is partially focused on the question. Some accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to produce an argument which reaches a judgement that is at least partially supported.	3–4 The answer has some evaluation of a range of sources that are primary and/or contemporary to the period. The answer demonstrates the candidate's own engagement with the sources, using some knowledge in order to produce an analysis of them within their historical context.	3–4 The answer has some evaluation of a range of interpretations of the historical issue chosen, based on some knowledge of the historical context. There is some analysis of the interpretations which is linked to the wider historical debate on the issue.
2	4–6 Most of the answer is focused more on the general topic area than the specific detail of the question. There is limited analysis and evaluation of key features of the period studied, based on limited knowledge and understanding which may be lacking in detail and inaccurate in places. This is used to produce a basic argument which reaches a judgement that is supported in a limited way.	2 The answer has limited evaluation of several sources that are primary and/or contemporary to the period. The answer demonstrates the candidate's own engagement with the sources, using limited knowledge in order to attempt a basic analysis of them within their historical context.	2 The answer has limited evaluation of several interpretations of the historical issue chosen, based on limited knowledge of the historical context. There is limited analysis and an attempt to consider the interpretations in relation to the wider historical debate on the issue.
1	1–3 The answer has a limited focus on the topic, but not the detail of the question. There is very limited analysis and evaluation of key features of the period studied, based on very limited, generalised and sometimes inaccurate knowledge and understanding. This is used to attempt a very basic argument which reaches a simplistic judgement.	1 The answer has a very limited evaluation of at least two sources that are primary and/or contemporary to the period. The answer demonstrates that the candidate has attempted to engage with the sources, using very generalised knowledge of historical context to give a very simplistic analysis of them.	1 The answer has a very limited evaluation of at least two interpretations of the historical issue chosen, with much description of the interpretations and historical context used in only a very general way to support the evaluation. Analysis is largely asserted and is only related to wider historical debate on the issue in a very simplistic way.
	0 No response or no response worthy of credit.	0 No response or no response worthy of credit.	0 No response or no response worthy of credit.

NOTE: The marking of all tasks should be on a 'best fit' principle, bearing in mind the weighting of the assessment objective. Candidate work which fully meets all criteria for a level should be awarded the top mark in the level.

3i. Synoptic assessment

- Synoptic assessment draws together all three of the distinct assessment objectives in OCR's A Level in History A.
- Synoptic assessment is included in Unit Y100 Topic based essay.

3j. Calculating qualification results

A learner's overall qualification grade for A Level History A will be calculated by adding together their marks from the four units taken to give their total weighted mark. This mark will then be compared to

the qualification level grade boundaries that apply for the combination of units taken by the learner and for the relevant exam series to determine the learner's overall qualification grade.

3