



AS HISTORY 7041/2B

The Wars of the Roses, 1450–1499

Component 2B The Fall of the House of Lancaster, 1450–1471

Mark scheme

June 2025

Version: 1.0 Final



Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from [aqa.org.uk](https://www.aqa.org.uk)

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Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly Level 3 with a small amount of Level 4 material it would be placed in Level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the Level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Section A

- 0 1** With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, which of these two sources is more valuable in explaining the impact of the Wars of the Roses on English society in the years 1469 to 1471?

[25 marks]*Target: AO2*

Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within the historical context.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the value of the sources in relation to the issue identified in the question. They will evaluate the sources thoroughly in order to provide a well-substantiated conclusion. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will provide a range of relevant well-supported comments on the value of the sources for the issue identified in the question. There will be sufficient comment to provide a supported conclusion but not all comments will be well-substantiated, and judgements will be limited. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. **16–20**
- L3:** The answer will provide some relevant comments on the value of the sources and there will be some explicit reference to the issue identified in the question. Judgements will however, be partial and/or thinly supported. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer will be partial. There may be either some relevant comments on the value of one source in relation to the issue identified in the question or some comment on both, but lacking depth and having little, if any, explicit link to the issue identified in the question. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. **6–10**
- L1:** The answer will either describe source content or offer stock phrases about the value of the source. There may be some comment on the issue identified in the question but it is likely to be limited, unsubstantiated and unconvincing. The response demonstrates limited understanding of context. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Students must deploy knowledge of the historical context to show an understanding of the relationship between the sources and the issues raised in the question, when assessing the significance of provenance, the arguments deployed in the sources and the tone and emphasis of the sources. Descriptive answers which fail to do this should be awarded no more than Level 2 at best. Answers should address both the value and the limitations of the sources for the particular question and purpose given.

In responding to this question, students may choose to address each source in turn or to adopt a more comparative approach in order to arrive at a judgement. Either approach is equally valid and what follows is indicative of the evaluation which may be relevant.

Source A: in assessing the value of this source as an explanation, students may refer to the following:

Provenance and tone

- the author was writing for Tudors. Students may identify that the Tudors wished to present the period before their time as chaotic and therefore, Henry VII as bringer of peace and stability. Therefore, the provenance affects how the author presents the impact on society
- the author is writing years after events. The knowledge used to write this was second hand and therefore might be guilty of overlooking the mundane reality. Hindsight may also account for the disparaging tone for the Earl of Warwick, 'nobles of this sort'
- in terms of tone and emphasis – the author uses sweeping statements and emotive language, such as 'everywhere churches...' and in keeping with desire to show this period as chaotic in contrast to Henry VII's reign.

Content and argument

- the source suggests that all of the country was affected. However, in 1469 large portions of the country and society were unaffected by the Yorkshire Rebellions mentioned. London continued to function and Edward IV did not deem it necessary to intervene in the Yorkshire rebellions. Therefore, the source may be deemed misleading in its representation of the impact of the Wars of the Roses on society
- the source suggests that there was a resentment from the poor regarding taxes and tithes. This could be deemed valid as the Yorkshire Rebellion also followed Edward IV's proclamation of war against the French in 1468 and further taxes, which were unpopular. This can be proven by the resistance of parliament to grant him these rights. Therefore, the source may be valuable for understanding the impact of the Wars of the Roses on society – as economic pressures were met with resistance, amplified by the factions
- the source also suggests the Wars of the Roses led to society being divided and quick to turn to violence. For example, it states they then 'resorted to arms'. This may be deemed valid as in 1470 there were also rebellions in Lincolnshire
- the source also suggests the nobles were very influential in society and able to use their position to encourage rebellions against the King. Indeed, it was believed Sir John Conyers, one of Warwick's retainers, was the leader of the rebellion cited. Furthermore, at the Battle of Losecote in 1470 the armies were said to have chanted 'A Warwick, A Clarence' suggesting that two key noble figures had incited another rebellion. Therefore, proving the source's view that society was fractured and exploited by the nobles, true of this period.

Source B: in assessing the value of this source as an explanation, students may refer to the following:

Provenance and tone

- the author is Burgundian and spent much of his time in France. This may allow him to compare the impact of the Wars of the Roses to the state of other European nations. In addition, the distance from events could be argued as limiting his understanding of the impact and students might criticise the fact he had not personally visited England
- the author also met Edward IV and the Earl of Warwick who would have shared their insights with him. This could be deemed valuable as both would have toured England and have an understanding of the military and political effects of the Wars of the Roses, providing Commynes with a broader view of events. However, students may also suggest that Edward IV and Warwick's testimony might be misleading and give an overly positive interpretation
- the tone of the source is definitive, which gives the author an air of authority which could be supported or challenged, for example 'nowhere' being used. In addition, it adopts a consciously sophisticated style.

Content and argument

- the source also suggests the impact on people was minimal. The students could challenge this as the Battle of Edgecote in 1469 saw approximately 10 000 men gather to fight and approximately 2000 died
- the source also suggests that the military impact of the wars was limited to nobility. This could be proven to be the case as in many of the battles the numbers involved were limited to the nobles and their retainers. However, the Yorkshire and Lincolnshire rebellions in 1469–70 saw a large number of commonweal engage in the fighting at both the Battles of Edgecote and Losecote
- the source also suggests English society is less affected by warfare than other nations. This could be deemed valid as few sieges occurred and revolts such as that of Robin of Redesdale were put down swiftly so had little impact on wider society.

In arriving at a judgement as to which source might be of greater value, students might suggest that whilst Vergil (Source A) overstates the impact of the Wars of the Roses on English society during this period, this view is marginally more valuable than that of Commynes (Source B) who underplays the impact significantly. For example, during the Readeption of Henry VI, in 1470, lawlessness flourished as prisoners were freed from prison by those angry with the return to the weak kingship of Henry VI. However, counter-arguments may suggest the Wars of the Roses were only devastating for sporadic periods and that, on the whole, battles were short and usually of small scale. Arguments of either type should be equally rewarded for well-substantiated analysis.

Section B

- 0 2** 'Growing political division, in the years 1450 to 1455, was due to the actions of Richard, Duke of York.'

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

[25 marks]

Target: 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.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment leading to substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be analytical comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance. However, there may be some generalisation and judgements will be limited and only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** The answer will show some understanding of the full demands of the question and the answer will be adequately organised. There will be appropriate information showing an understanding of some key features and/or issues but the answer may be limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some comment in relation to the question. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer will be descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments supporting the view that growing political division, in the years 1450 to 1455, was due to the actions of Richard, Duke of York might include:

- Richard defied the King's authority, creating tension. He returned from Ireland without the King's permission and amassed forces against the royal army at Dartford in 1452
- Richard was responsible for the development of factionalism. His dispute with Somerset has been argued to have very personal motivations and that his goal was the removal of Somerset to attain more power for himself
- Richard was responsible, due to the manifestos he issued, to stir commonweal against Somerset and the court party. For example, the Shrewsbury Manifesto and the bills he submitted to parliament
- York's military actions created political fallout. He raised troops against the King at Dartford in 1452 and again at the First Battle of St Albans in 1455, resulting in the death of Somerset which arguably entrenched the divisions between the factions.

Arguments challenging the view that growing political division, in the years 1450 to 1455, was due to the actions of Richard, Duke of York might include:

- Richard was not responsible as, during both his Protectorates, he took steps to make improvements across the kingdom, aiming for unity rather than division. For example, he submitted Acts of Resumption to improve the Crown's financial stability and resolved the Courtenay-Bonville feud peacefully
- Richard continually swore allegiance to Henry and returned from Ireland only to profess his loyalty to Henry and remove any link between Cade's rebellion and himself. Equally, at Dartford and St Albans, and was keen to reconcile with the King and the court party peacefully
- it was Henry VI who was responsible for the divisions as it was his decision to make York the Lieutenant of Ireland and reward Somerset which forced the divide between the two
- others were responsible – it could be argued Cade's rebellion was responsible for the divisions, or Somerset's actions in France and England were responsible for the divisions.

Students may conclude that, whilst Richard was at pains to prove his loyalty to Henry VI, his actions ultimately created divisions and fostered factionalism. Counter-arguments are equally valid which may suggest that whilst Richard was at the heart of factionalism, he was not the instigator as the ultimate cause of division was the weakness and ill-health of Henry VI.

- 0 3** 'The Lancastrians were in a strong position between 1459 and the Second Battle of St Albans in February 1461.'

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

[25 marks]

Target: 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.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment leading to substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be analytical comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance. However, there may be some generalisation and judgements will be limited and only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** The answer will show some understanding of the full demands of the question and the answer will be adequately organised. There will be appropriate information showing an understanding of some key features and/or issues but the answer may be limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some comment in relation to the question. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer will be descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments supporting the view that the Lancastrians were in a strong position between 1459 and the Second Battle of St Albans in February 1461 might include:

- the Lancastrians were in a strong position as they eliminated key rivals. The death of Richard, Duke of York, being the most notable example
- military victories: the Lancastrians won victories at Ludford Bridge, Second Battle of St Albans. It could further be argued that the treachery at both battles revealed the fragility of Yorkist support
- the Lancastrians were in a strong position as they regained the possession of Henry VI by the end of this period. His presence was important as it united the King, Queen and Prince as a symbol of authority as well as having the capacity to call parliament
- the Lancastrians were in a strong position as at the Parliament of Devils, Queen Margaret demonstrated her power and weakened Yorkists by removing their titles, lands and inheritance rights and furthermore, confirming them as traitors which may hamper the Yorkist attempts to amass support.

Arguments challenging the view that the Lancastrians were in a strong position between 1459 and the Second Battle of St Albans in February 1461 might include:

- the Act of Accord was signed during this period, which removed Edward of Westminster from the line of succession. This demonstrates a failure for the Lancastrians and was used by the Yorkists to legitimise their claims to the throne
- the Lancastrians suffered military losses, for example Blore Heath, Northampton and Mortimer's Cross. These losses demonstrated the weakness of Lancastrian military leadership against better Yorkist tactics and commanders. Therefore, they were not in a strong position
- the Lancastrians failed to retake London after the Second Battle of St Albans, in the main due to the unpopularity of Queen Margaret and her 'alien' troops. This meant their position was weak, rather than strong as they failed to control the capital
- the Parliament of Devils backfired and made Yorkists even more determined to fight, as it left them with nothing to lose. This led to a resurgence of anti-Lancastrian propaganda as well as political and military challenges to their authority, weakening their position.

Students may conclude that whilst the Lancastrians had some key victories and points of celebration, by February of 1461 there was still a significant threat from the Yorkists and the Act of Accord had not been overturned which left Edward of Westminster outside the line of succession.