



GCE

History A

Y302/01: The Viking Age c.790-1066

A Level

Mark Scheme for June 2025

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which marks were awarded by examiners. It does not indicate the details of the discussions which took place at an examiners' meeting before marking commenced.

All examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the report on the examination.

© OCR 2025

RM ASSESSOR

1. Make sure that you have accessed and completed the relevant training packages for on-screen marking: *RM Assessor Online Training: OCR Essential Guide to Marking*.
2. Make sure that you have read and understood the mark scheme and the question paper for this unit. These are available in RM Assessor
3. Log-in to RM Assessor and mark the **required number** of practice responses (“scripts”) and the **required number** of standardisation responses.

MARKING

1. Mark strictly to the mark scheme.
2. Marks awarded must relate directly to the marking criteria.
3. The schedule of dates is very important. It is essential that you meet the RM Assessor 50% and 100% (traditional 40% Batch 1 and 100% Batch 2) deadlines. If you experience problems, you must contact your Team Leader (Supervisor) without delay.
4. If you are in any doubt about applying the mark scheme, consult your Team Leader by telephone or the RM Assessor messaging system, or by email.
5. **Crossed Out Responses**
Where a candidate has crossed out a response and provided a clear alternative then the crossed out response is not marked. Where no alternative response has been provided, examiners may give candidates the benefit of the doubt and mark the crossed out response where legible.

Rubric Error Responses – Optional Questions

Where candidates have a choice of question across a whole paper or a whole section and have provided more answers than required, then all responses are marked and the highest mark allowable within the rubric is given. Enter a mark for each question answered into RM assessor, which will select the highest mark from those awarded. *(The underlying assumption is that the candidate has penalised themselves by attempting more questions than necessary in the time allowed.)*

Multiple Choice Question Responses

When a multiple choice question has only a single, correct response and a candidate provides two responses (even if one of these responses is correct), then no mark should be awarded (as it is not possible to determine which was the first response selected by the candidate).

When a question requires candidates to select more than one option/multiple options, then local marking arrangements need to ensure consistency of approach.

Contradictory Responses

When a candidate provides contradictory responses, then no mark should be awarded, even if one of the answers is correct.

Short Answer Questions (requiring only a list by way of a response, usually worth only **one mark per response**)

Where candidates are required to provide a set number of short answer responses then only the set number of responses should be marked. The response space should be marked from left to right on each line and then line by line until the required number of responses have been considered. The remaining responses should not then be marked. Examiners will have to apply judgement as to whether a 'second response' on a line is a development of the 'first response', rather than a separate, discrete response. *(The underlying assumption is that the candidate is attempting to hedge their bets and therefore getting undue benefit rather than engaging with the question and giving the most relevant/correct responses.)*

Short Answer Questions (requiring a more developed response, worth **two or more marks**)

If the candidates are required to provide a description of, say, three items or factors and four items or factors are provided, then mark on a similar basis – that is downwards (as it is unlikely in this situation that a candidate will provide more than one response in each section of the response space.)

Longer Answer Questions (requiring a developed response)

Where candidates have provided two (or more) responses to a medium or high tariff question which only required a single (developed) response and not crossed out the first response, then only the first response should be marked. Examiners will need to apply professional judgement as to whether the second (or a subsequent) response is a 'new start' or simply a poorly expressed continuation of the first response.

6. Always check the pages (and additional objects if present) at the end of the response in case any answers have been continued there. If the candidate has continued an answer there, then add a tick to confirm that the work has been seen.

7. There is a NR (**No Response**) option. Award NR (No Response):
 - if there is nothing written at all in the answer space

- OR if there is a comment which does not in any way relate to the question (e.g., 'can't do', 'don't know')
- OR if there is a mark (e.g., a dash, a question mark) which is not an attempt at the question.

Note: Award 0 marks – for an attempt that earns no credit (including copying out the question).

8. The RM Assessor **comments box** is used by your team leader to explain the marking of the practice responses. Please refer to these comments when checking your practice responses. **Do not use the comments box for any other reason.**
If you have any questions or comments for your team leader, use the phone, the RM Assessor messaging system, or e-mail.
9. Assistant Examiners will send a brief report on the performance of candidates to their Team Leader (Supervisor) via email by the end of the marking period. The report should contain notes on particular strengths displayed as well as common errors or weaknesses. Constructive criticism of the question paper/mark scheme is also appreciated.
10. For answers marked by levels of response:
 - a. **To determine the level** – start at the highest level and work down until you reach the level that matches the answer
 - b. **To determine the mark within the level**, consider the following

Descriptor	Award mark
On the borderline of this level and the one below	At bottom of level
Just enough achievement on balance for this level	Above bottom and either below middle or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Meets the criteria but with some slight inconsistency	Above middle and either below top of level or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Consistently meets the criteria for this level	At top of level

11. Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	Blank Page
	Highlight
Off-page comment	
	Assertion
	Analysis
	Evaluation
	Explanation
	Factor
	Illustrates/Describes
	Irrelevant, a significant amount of material that does not answer the question
	Judgement
	Knowledge and understanding
	Simple comment
	Unclear
	View
	Synthesis
	Continuity/Change

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
1			Evaluate the interpretations in both of the two passages. Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the origins and growth of Viking Dublin. In locating the Interpretations within the wider historical debate, answers might suggest that Interpretation A puts forward the view that Viking Age Dublin was, first and foremost, a trading settlement which evolved into a town. • In evaluating Interpretation A, answers might argue that it is valid since the dominance of Dublin as a trading centre probably explains the demise of other centres (e.g. Annagassan in Co. Louth, abandoned c. 852). • Answers might argue that the intensification of settlement activity in Dublin indicates a shift from a plunder-based economy to an urban economy based on trade. • Answers might argue that there is evidence of the beginnings of a money economy in the discovery in Dublin of (mostly English) coins, including three substantial hoards; in the 990s the Scandinavian king Sigtryggr Silkenbeard established Dublin's first mint. • Answers might argue that there is further evidence of the urbanisation of Viking Dublin including a bridge, workshops, houses, and churches. • Answers might argue that artefacts closely associated with trade activity found in Viking Age Dublin include sets of balance scales,	30	The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set. <u>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</u> The indicative content is intended to reflect the knowledge and understanding a candidate is likely to analyse and evaluate in order to arrive at a judgement in line with the question set. • No set answer is expected. • At Level 5 and above answers will evaluate both interpretations, locating them within the wider historical debate about the issue and using their own knowledge, and reach a balanced judgement as to which they consider the most convincing about the issue in the question. • To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material. • Knowledge must not be credited in isolation, it should only be credited where it is used to analyse and evaluate the interpretations, in line with descriptions in the levels mark scheme.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			weights, remains of belt-purses, as well as exotics (e.g. amber, walrus ivory, soapstone, jet, silk, glass). • Answers might argue that written records indicate Dublin may have been the biggest slave market in Britain and Ireland. • Answers might argue that the scale of Viking trade is indicated in associated buried treasures including the 10th century Cuerdale Hoard found in England but thought to be that of exiled Dublin Vikings. In locating the Interpretations within the wider historical debate, answers might suggest that Interpretation B puts forward the view that Viking Age Dublin was, first and foremost, a base for Viking fleets engaged in piracy and warfare. • In evaluating Interpretation B, answers might argue it is valid as the settlement was ideally located on the east coast for raids on England and at a site well-suited to defence from the hostile Irish clans. • Answers might argue that it is recorded that in 871 the Dublin fleet returned with two hundred shiploads of enslaved Anglo-Saxons, Britons and Picts in one of its most infamous raids. • Answers might argue that the Viking preoccupation with sea-borne piracy could explain the absence of evidence for Viking settlement inland. • Answers might argue that the evidence for Viking Dublin being 'a hard town, an appropriate base for a piratical fleet' is entirely what should		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			be expected of a society engaged in the capture and enslavement of people elsewhere. • Answers might argue that the Irish annals provide ample evidence of Dublin being a substantial military base (e.g. the record of the alleged deaths of well over 1000 Dublin Vikings in warfare with the Irish in a single year – 847). • Answers might argue that nearly half of all Viking burials with weapons found so far in the British Isles (incl. Ireland) are from Dublin.		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
2*			‘Throughout the period from c.790 to 1066, the payment of Danegeld was the most effective response to Viking raids on England.’ How far do you agree? Answers might consider some of the following themes: the importance of Danegeld, burhs, the reform of the Saxon fyrd, the building of warships, diplomacy and alliances, pitched battles. In arguing the payment of Danegeld was the most effective response, • Answers might consider the conviction of historians that Alfred paid Danegeld (e.g. in 871) thus securing Wessex and, ultimately, the possibility of a future united kingdom of England. • Answers might argue that the vast sums raised by Aethelred indicate it was a simple, sensible option for a very prosperous kingdom.	25	The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set. Both features that support the hypothesis and features that challenge the hypothesis are detailed. <u>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</u> The indicative content is intended to reflect the knowledge and understanding a candidate is likely to analyse and evaluate in order to arrive at a judgement in line with the question set. • No set answer is expected. • At higher levels answers might establish criteria against which to judge the validity of the interpretation. • To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material. • Knowledge must not be credited in isolation. It should only be credited where it is used as the basis for analysis and evaluation, in line with descriptions in the levels mark scheme.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			• Answers might argue the payment of Danegeld was greatly preferable to the human and financial cost of warfare. • Answers might argue it worked (e.g. in securing Aethelred several years without further raids between 994 and 1002). • Answers might consider how Danegeld / heregeld was spent on paying off mercenaries responsible for securing the Anglo-Danish dynasty in the reign of Cnut. • Answers might argue Danegeld agreements were a two-way relationship invoking a measure of protection by those in receipt from potential raids by other interested parties (e.g. relations with Olaf in Aethelred's reign). In arguing that other types of response were equally, or more, effective, • Answers might consider a range of less spectacular yet effective strategies such as burying treasure and retiring to the security of round towers (e.g. at Lindisfarne). • Answers might consider the reform of the organisation of the Saxon fyrd in Alfred's reign. • Answers might consider the building of ships to challenge Viking raiders at sea (e.g. in the invasion attempt in 896). • Answers might consider the Burghal Hidage document as evidence for a strategic network of burhs evenly spread across Wessex, Kent and parts of Mercia and their role in determining the outcome of Viking invasions (e.g. in the south-east in the 890s). • Answers might consider the importance of burhs in protecting the coast (e.g. Wareham,		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			Hastings), inland rivers and settlements (e.g. Southwark, Oxford), and ecclesiastical centres (e.g. Shaftesbury, Malmesbury). • Answers might consider the importance of engagement in open warfare as a response to Viking raids (e.g. battles of Edington 878, Brunanburh 937, Stamford Bridge 1066). • Answers might consider the importance of alliances and diplomacy (e.g. 9C and early 10C marriage alliances between Wessex and Mercian rulers, Treaty of Wedmore in 878, papal support in Aethelred's alliance with Richard of Normandy in 991).		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
3*			'Throughout the period from c.790 to 1066, farming made the most important contribution to Viking livelihood in Scandinavia.' How far do you agree? Answers might consider some of the following themes: agriculture, fishing, hunting, manufacturing, extraction of minerals, trading, raiding In arguing farming was the most important contribution to Viking livelihood in Scandinavia, • Answers might consider the high numbers, in more fertile regions, of Scandinavians engaged in farming compared to those engaged in other forms of economic activity.	25	The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set. Both features that support the hypothesis and features that challenge the hypothesis are detailed. <u>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</u> The indicative content is intended to reflect the knowledge and understanding a candidate is likely to analyse and evaluate in order to arrive at a judgement in line with the question set. • No set answer is expected • At higher levels answers might establish criteria against which to judge the validity of the interpretation. • To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			• Answers might argue that the crops grown by farmers fed the whole population including those not themselves engaged in agriculture. • Answers might consider the importance of agriculture in providing the raw materials for clothing (e.g. wool). • Answers might consider the importance of pastoral farming in the provision of a range of primary and secondary animal products (meat, milk, leather etc.). • Answers might consider the importance of woodland management and arboriculture (e.g. for fuel, buildings, shipping). • Answers might consider the importance of honey and fruit as highly prized sweeteners (e.g. in the drink and food consumed at feasts). In arguing farming was not the most important contribution to Viking livelihood in Scandinavia, • Answers might consider the importance of hunting (e.g. of elk, aurochs, bears, seals, walruses) especially in the far north. • Answers might consider the importance of fishing especially among coastal settlements. • Answers might consider the importance of manufacturing (e.g. ship-building, weaving, metal-working, brewing). • Answers might consider the importance of trade, especially a fast-growing coastal import-export trade. • Answers might consider the increasing importance of piracy and raiding as an economic activity.		• Knowledge must not be credited in isolation. It should only be credited where it is used as the basis for analysis and evaluation, in line with descriptions in the levels mark scheme.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			Answers might consider the increasing importance of mineral extraction (e.g. iron for making weapons).		
4*			‘Religion, more than anything else, defined Viking culture throughout the period from c.790 to 1066.’ How far do you agree? Answers might consider some of the following themes: the nature and expression of religious beliefs, the roles of religious observance, art, material culture, environments, social, economic and political structures, custom and tradition. In arguing that religion was the most significant factor, Answers might consider the importance of religious motifs in Viking pictorial art. Answers might consider the importance of religious monuments in Viking culture (e.g. Jelling). Answers might consider the influence of religious beliefs in Viking burial customs (e.g. grave-goods, ship burials and belief in the afterlife). Answers might consider the religious elements in Viking sagas and poetry. Answers might consider the relationship between religion and martial activities (e.g. the concept of Valhalla; runic inscriptions on swords). Answers might consider the importance of religion on codes of conduct (e.g. after conversion to Christianity).	25	The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set. Both features that support the hypothesis and features that challenge the hypothesis are detailed. <u>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</u> The indicative content is intended to reflect the knowledge and understanding a candidate is likely to analyse and evaluate in order to arrive at a judgement in line with the question set. - No set answer is expected - At higher levels answers might establish criteria against which to judge the validity of the interpretation. - To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material. - Knowledge must not be credited in isolation. It should only be credited where it is used as the basis for analysis and evaluation, in line with descriptions in the levels mark scheme.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			• Answers might consider the importance of religion in Vikings' encounters with other cultures (e.g. the defacing, destruction of structures associated with other faiths) In arguing that other elements defined Viking culture, • Answers might consider artistic output that was not overtly influenced by religion (e.g. jewellery, dress, many aspects of oral/written culture). • Answers might consider aspects of material culture that were not directly influenced by religion (e.g. boat building). • Answers might consider the place of custom and tradition in Viking society and culture (e.g. in relation to the position of women). • Answers might consider environmental factors in shaping maritime / agricultural / urban Viking culture. • Answers might consider the importance of absorption of non-religious aspects of other cultures (e.g. language). • Answers might consider pragmatic factors shaping Viking culture such as concepts of kingship, kinship and social hierarchy.		

APPENDIX 1 – this contains a generic mark scheme grid

	<i>AO3: Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted.</i>
	Generic mark scheme for Section A, Question 1: Interpretation [30]
Level 6 26–30 marks	The answer has a very good focus on the question throughout. It has thorough and sustained evaluation of the interpretations, using detailed and accurate knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue, in order to produce a convincing and supported analysis of them in relation to the question.
Level 5 21–25 marks	The answer has a good focus on the question throughout. It has good evaluation of the interpretations, using relevant knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue, in order to produce a supported analysis of them in relation to the question.
Level 4 16–20 marks	The answer is mostly focused on the question. It has evaluation of the interpretations based on generally relevant knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue, in order to produce an analysis of them in relation to the question.
Level 3 11–15 marks	The answer is partially focused on the question. It has partial evaluation of the interpretations based on some knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue. There may be some use of information from one of the two interpretations to support the evaluation of the other, but the evaluation will not rely on this. There is a limited analysis of the interpretations in relation to the question.
Level 2 6–10 marks	The answer has a limited focus on the question. Parts of the answer are just description of the interpretations, with evaluation in relation to historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue being weak, and evaluation relying heavily on information drawn from the other interpretation. There is a very limited analysis of the interpretations in relation to the question.
Level 1 1–5 marks	The answer has some relevance to the topic, but not the specific question. The answer consists mostly of description of the interpretations with very limited evaluation based on very generalised knowledge of historical context and minimal or no reference to the wider historical debate. Analysis of the interpretations in relation to the question is either in the form of assertion or lacking.
0 marks	No evidence of understanding and no demonstration of any relevant knowledge.

	<i>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.</i>
	Generic mark scheme for Section B, Questions 2, 3 and 4: Essay [25]
Level 6 21–25 marks	The answer has a very good focus on the question. Detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to reach a fully developed synthesis supporting a convincing and substantiated judgement. There is a well-developed and sustained line of reasoning which is coherent and logically structured. The information presented is entirely relevant and substantiated.
Level 5 17–20 marks	The answer has a good focus on the question. Generally accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to reach a developed synthesis supporting a substantiated judgement. There is a well-developed line of reasoning which is clear and logically structured. The information presented is relevant and in the most part substantiated.
Level 4 13–16 marks	The answer is mostly focused on the question. Relevant knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to reach a synthesis supporting a reasonable judgement. There is a line of reasoning presented with some structure. The information presented is in the most-part relevant and supported by some evidence.
Level 3 9–12 marks	The answer has a partial focus on the question. Some relevant knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and explain key features of the period studied in order to attempt an undeveloped synthesis, which is linked to a judgement, though the supporting explanation may lack detail and clarity. The information has some relevance and is presented with limited structure. The information is supported by limited evidence.
Level 2 5–8 marks	The answer has only a limited focus on the question. Limited relevant knowledge and understanding is used to give a limited explanation and analysis of key features of the period studied. There is a judgement but this may not be clearly linked with the supporting explanation. The information has some relevance, but is communicated in an unstructured way. The information is supported by limited evidence and the relationship to the evidence may not be clear.
Level 1 1–4 marks	The answer has a limited focus on the topic, but not the specific question. The answer is largely descriptive, with only very generalised knowledge of the period studied being used to attempt basic explanation and very limited analysis. Judgements are unsupported and are not linked to analysis. Information presented is basic and may be ambiguous or unstructured. The information is supported by limited evidence.
0 marks	The answer contains no relevant information.

Need to get in touch?

If you ever have any questions about OCR qualifications or services (including administration, logistics and teaching) please feel free to get in touch with our customer support centre.

Call us on

01223 553998

Alternatively, you can email us on

support@ocr.org.uk

For more information visit



ocr.org.uk/qualifications/resource-finder



ocr.org.uk



Twitter/ocrextams



/ocrextams



/company/ocr



/ocrextams



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS & ASSESSMENT

OCR is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored. © OCR 2025 Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registered office The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA.

Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.

OCR operates academic and vocational qualifications regulated by Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA as listed in their qualifications registers including A Levels, GCSEs, Cambridge Technicals and Cambridge Nationals.

OCR provides resources to help you deliver our qualifications. These resources do not represent any particular teaching method we expect you to use. We update our resources regularly and aim to make sure content is accurate but please check the OCR website so that you have the most up-to-date version. OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in these resources.

Though we make every effort to check our resources, there may be contradictions between published support and the specification, so it is important that you always use information in the latest specification. We indicate any specification changes within the document itself, change the version number and provide a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource, please [contact us](#).

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR or are thinking about switching, you can request more information using our [Expression of Interest form](#).

Please [get in touch](#) if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support you in delivering our qualifications.