



GCE

History A

Y311/01: The origins and growth of the British Empire 1558-1783

A Level

Mark Scheme for June 2025

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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.

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MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

PREPARATION FOR MARKING

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:
- To determine the level** – start at the highest level and work down until you reach the level that matches the answer
 - 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
BP	Blank Page
	Highlight
Off-page comment	
A	Assertion
AN	Analysis
EVAL	Evaluation
EXP	Explanation
F	Factor
ILL	Illustrates/Describes
IRRL	Irrelevant, a significant amount of material that does not answer the question
J	Judgement
KU	Knowledge and understanding
P	Provenance
SC	Simple comment
?	Unclear
V	View

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Annotation	Meaning
S	Synthesis
C	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 consequences of rebellions in the American colonies in the late seventeenth century. In locating the Interpretations within the wider historical debate, answers might suggest that Interpretation A argues that Bacon's rebellion had some success and the unrest of 1689 led to some changes. • In evaluating Interpretation A, answers might argue that Bacon 's rebellion did bring success as the poll tax was dramatically reduced. • Answers might argue the Assembly took up Bacon's call for expansion westwards so more land was available. • Answers might argue the number of indentured servants declined because of the improved economic conditions in Britain. • Answers might argue A is correct to argue there were a number of coups as in Boston armed rebels arrested Andros, the fort in New York was seized, and in Maryland the Protestant majority seized power from the Catholic governor. • Answers might argue that old charters were restored in New York and New England. • Answers might argue that A is correct as William III did make compromises, a royal governor took over in Maryland, whilst a	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 will reach a balanced judgement as to which they consider the most convincing about the issue in the question. • To be valid judgements they 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 sources, in line with the descriptions in the levels mark scheme.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			compromise charter was brought in in Massachusetts. In locating the Interpretations within the wider historical debate, answers might suggest that Interpretation B argues Bacon's rebellion was a failure and that later unrest saw colonies defending Protestantism which created greater unity, whilst governors now had to follow the rule of law • In evaluating Interpretation B, answers might argue B is correct as the extension of the franchise was lost and other reforms were amended. • Answers might argue B is correct as the new governor was granted a permanent income through a two-shilling duty on each hogshead of tobacco exported. • Answers might argue B is correct as the economic grievances of small farmers continued and the riots of 1682 were due to the low price of tobacco. • Answers might argue B is correct as in 1700 Parliament passed an act permitting the prosecution of governors, so they had to abide by the laws. • Answers might argue that the settlers justified their right to resist a tyrannical ruler/monarch and used the language of English rights to justify this.		

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Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			• Answers might consider the unity created by the shared religious vision which unified a diverse population. • Answers might consider that ultimately the events led to an expression of parliamentary authority.		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
2*			To what extent did imperial priorities change in the period from 1558 to 1783? Answers might consider some of the following themes: expansion, territory, trade and the economy, financial gain. In arguing that priorities did change, • It might be argued that as the period progressed there was a greater willingness to acquire land and control and not simply find trading routes, such as the North West and North East Passages. • Answers might consider the increased attachment of British government to the colonies rather than companies or individuals. • Answers might consider the widening geographical interest to involve Asia and Africa, not just North America. • Answers might consider the extent to which mercantilist thought influenced priorities. • Answers might consider the move away from trading posts and ports to larger acquisitions of land. • Answers might consider the changing nature of trade from spices to plantation economies. In arguing that priorities did not change, • It might be argued that commerce, trade and financial gain remained a priority.	25	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 higher levels answers might establish criteria against which to judge • 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.

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Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			• Answers might consider that throughout the period acquisition of profit remained important. • Answers might consider that America remained the focus of the Empire. • Answers might consider the continuing desire to exclude other nations, particularly France. • Answers might consider colonies were seen as a supplier of raw materials and market for British goods. • Answers might consider colonies were used as a 'dumping ground' for undesirables - criminals, vagrants, paupers, political prisoners. • Answers might consider the light touch of British rule (salutary neglect).		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
3*			How far did the nature of colonial rule change in the period from 1558 to 1783? Answers might consider some of the following themes: privateering, chartered companies, plantations, trading posts, taxation, relationship between Crown, parliament and colonies. In supporting the argument it did change, • It might be argued that trading and chartered companies lost their role. • Answers might consider the increased involvement of the British government. • Answers might consider the increased desire and consequences of attempts to raise revenue and taxation from the colonies. • Answers might consider the establishment of formal methods of government as colonies rather than trading posts were established. • Answers might consider the changing nature of the relationship with local rulers. • Answers might consider that colonial rule became more exploitative. In challenging the argument it did not change, • It might be argued that in many instances the colonists continued to govern themselves. • Answers might consider that even where the British government was involved there was a policy of salutary neglect.	25	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 higher levels answers might establish criteria against which to judge • 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 British government issued charters which tied colonies to the Crown. • Answers might consider the colonies were subject to parliamentary legislation. • Answers might consider parliament gave little attention to colonial affairs. • Answers might consider the signing of treaties with local rulers and native populations.		
4*			‘The most important impact of the British Empire on its emerging colonies in the period from 1558 to 1783 was population change.’ How far do you agree? Answers might consider some of the following themes: political, socio-cultural, economic, demographic, scientific, technological, cultural. In supporting the hypothesis in the question, • It might be argued that large numbers of the indigenous population died as a result of western diseases. • Answers might consider the impact of the arrival of large numbers of settlers, particularly in the Americas. • Answers might consider the impact of slaves from Africa on the population.	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 • 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 change to the population structure and its impact on society. • Answers might consider the impact of population change on the availability of land. • Answers might consider the pressure on indigenous peoples to move. In challenging the hypothesis in the question, • It might be argued that the most important change was economic as the emerging colonies were exploited in the mercantilist system. • Answers might consider the impact on political structures. • Answers might consider the development of opposition. • Answers might consider the impact on internal power relationships. • Answers might consider the impact of the development of plantations. • Answers might consider the imposition of taxation.		

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.

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