



GCE

History A

**Y312/01: Thematic study and historical interpretations:
Popular culture and the witchcraze of the 16th and 17th
centuries**

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:

- 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 Witchcraze in Southern Germany in the period from c.1590 to 1630. In locating the Interpretations within the wider historical debate, answers might suggest that Interpretation A argues that political and religious circumstances in Southern Germany were the most important cause of the Witchcraze. • In evaluating Interpretation A, answers might argue that the Carolina created under Charles V in 1532 meant justice was a local issue and therefore local authorities had considerable influence. • Answers might argue that prince-bishops, such as Dornheim or von Aschhausen, played a crucial role and were aided by Jesuits. • Answers might argue the Reformation meant people feared the devil was all round them and therefore looked to cleanse the region. • Answers might argue the lack of central political control allowed the witchcraze to develop. • Answers might argue the conversion of Protestant parishes to Catholicism was prioritised and there was persecution and imprisonment for those who refused to convert.	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
			In locating the Interpretations within the wider historical debate, answers might suggest that Interpretation B argues that the Thirty Years War and natural disasters were the most important cause. • In evaluating Interpretation B, answers might argue that large armies devastated the region, towns were plundered and young men seized, and the fear of witches was linked to misfortune. • Answers might argue the poor conditions led to religious fanaticism and the purging of opposing religions. • Answers might argue that war led to a shortage of silver and to inflation, which caused a price rise which was blamed on witchcraft. • Answers might argue trials peaked in Bamberg in 1629 when frost destroyed the wine crop. • Answers might argue it was in the interests of prince-bishops to put people on trial for witchcraft to prevent the return of bad weather.		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
2*			‘Religious change was the most important challenge to popular culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.’ How far do you agree? Answers might consider some of the following themes: religious, political, printing, economic and social change, the withdrawal of the elite. In supporting the hypothesis in the question, • It might be argued the Reformation and Counter Reformation led to changes in attitude to popular culture. • Answers might consider how religion led to reforms in behaviour. • Answers might consider how the Protestant Reformation attacked unruly aspects of popular culture and wanted to create a ‘godly’ society. • Answers might consider reformers attacked rowdiness, drunkenness, and sexual promiscuity which accompanied many festivals and carnivals. • Answers might consider the desire to reinforce clerical standards and therefore remove festivals that mocked the ecclesiastical establishment. In challenging the hypothesis in the question,	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 key issue. • 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
			• It might be argued that state centralisation led to a desire to crack down on festivals that inverted the social order. • Answers might consider governments allied with the Church to impose elite cultures. • Answers might consider the impact of economic and social changes which impacted entertainment and the change in leisure activities. • Answers might consider the impact of the printing revolution which meant print became a form of entertainment. • Answers might consider the impact of the withdrawal of the elite from popular culture.		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
3*			To what extent were witch hunts more common in towns than in the countryside during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? Answers might consider some of the following themes: economic developments, urbanisation, social changes, popular culture, gender. In supporting the hypothesis in the question, • It might be argued that witch accusations in towns were more associated with the later period. • Answers might consider prince-bishoprics in south Germany. • Answers might consider the movement of witchfinders from villages to towns, such as Trier, Wurzburg and Bamberg. • Answers might consider events in Rouen in 1670 and East Anglia in the 1640s. In challenging the hypothesis in the question, • It might be argued that most people lived in rural areas and rural areas were intimate and this allowed enmity to develop. • Answers might consider rural areas were more conservative in outlook and maintained traditional beliefs, including about witchcraft. • Answers might consider cunning men and wise women played an important role in village life and the tradition of 'white magic' which	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 the key issue. • 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
			created an environment in which beliefs in witchcraft were more readily accepted. • Answers might consider the role of village committees and the opportunities it provided those below the elite. • Answers might consider anxieties were less intense in urban areas and local authorities were more able to intervene to prevent riots and safeguard food supplies.		
4*			To what extent did the response of the authorities to witchcraft remain the same throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? Answers might consider some of the following themes: attacks on popular practices, religious writings, attitudes of Catholics and Protestants to witchcraft, legal developments. In arguing that the response of the authorities remained the same, • It might be argued that torture was a feature in some states throughout the period. • Answers might consider the determination of authorities to obtain confessions. • Answers might consider the publication of books and pamphlets attacking witchcraft • Answers might consider the role of denunciations.	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 the key issue. • 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 desire of the state to retain control over the population • Answers might consider the speed of many trials, which was quick • Answers might consider the response of local authorities and communities who took other actions before going to law. In arguing that the response of the authorities changed, • It might be argued that there was greater scepticism about witchcraft by the end of the period • Answers might consider the changing nature of legal developments with the decline in the accusatorial system and growth of inquisitorial system • Answers might consider the decline in the use of religious courts. • Answers might consider the increased levels of proof required for conviction • Answers might the changing attitude towards spectral evidence • Answers might consider consider the changing attitudes of judges and magistrates • Answers might consider the growing concern about the testimony of witnesses • Answers might consider the decline in witchcraft prosecutions.		

Y312/01

Mark Scheme

June 2025

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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