



GCSE HISTORY 8145/2B/C

Paper 2 Section B/C: Elizabethan England, c1568–1603

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

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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.

0 1

How convincing is **Interpretation A** about poverty in Elizabethan England?

Explain your answer based on your contextual knowledge and what it says in **Interpretation A**.

[8 marks]

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target

**Analyse individual interpretations (AO4a)
Evaluate interpretations and make substantiated judgements in the context of historical events studied (AO4d)**

Level 4: Complex evaluation of interpretation with sustained judgement based on contextual knowledge/understanding 7–8

Extends Level 3.

Students may progress from a developed evaluation of interpretation by complex analysis of the interpretation supported by factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, the interpretation is convincing because if the government did not deal with the problem of the poor, it might eventually lead to the overthrow of Queen Elizabeth. The government reformed the Poor Law and it lasted until the 19th century. It was an achievement because it recognised that not all poor people were poor for the same reason.

Level 3: Developed evaluation of interpretation based on contextual knowledge/understanding 5–6

Extends Level 2.

Students may progress from a simple evaluation of the interpretation by extended reasoning supported by factual knowledge and understanding of more than one aspect of the interpretation.

For example, it is convincing because more people were desperate and this led to the fear amongst the upper classes that more crimes would be committed and there would be more violence. The Privy Council enquired amongst local JPs and town councils to see who had come up with effective methods for dealing with the problem. Towns like Ipswich, Norwich and York were separating the deserving poor from the idle and giving them work.

Level 2:	Simple evaluation of interpretation based on contextual knowledge/understanding	3–4
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Students may progress from a basic analysis of interpretation by reasoning supported with factual knowledge and understanding based on one aspect of the interpretation.

For example, the interpretation is convincing because there were more poor people in England due to inflation but also due to population growth. There were bad harvests between 1594 and 1598 so people had no food.

Level 1:	Basic analysis of interpretation based on contextual knowledge/understanding	1–2
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Answers may show understanding/support for interpretation, but the case is made by assertion/recognition of agreement.

For example, in Elizabethan England, there was a surge in the numbers of poor people at this time which alarmed people. So they brought in the Poor Law in 1601.

Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question	0
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0 2

Explain what was important about the Spanish Armada.

[8 marks]

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target **Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order concepts (AO2:4)**
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied (AO1:4)

Level 4: **Complex explanation of consequences** **7–8**
Answer demonstrates a range of accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Extends Level 3.

Students may progress from a developed explanation by extended analysis of the consequences of the stated development (the Spanish Armada) in the broader historical context (Elizabethan England). This is supported by factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, what was important about the Spanish Armada was that it was defeated. If the Armada had not been defeated it is possible that the Elizabethan religious settlement would have been overturned and England restored to Catholicism. As it was England went on to become a major naval power. Leadership played a big part in what happened to the Armada. The Duke of Medina-Sidonia had little experience of sailing and was reluctant to change the plan that Philip II had given him which was to meet up with the Duke of Parma and transport his 27,000 troops across the channel on barges. Crucially, a lack of communication meant that Parma got tired of waiting for the Armada and sent his troops inland to mend canals thus delaying the Armada by several days, at which point the English struck sending fire ships to break up the well-disciplined Spanish fleet.

Level 3: **Developed explanation of consequences** **5–6**
Answer demonstrates a range of accurate knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Extends Level 2.

Students may progress from a simple explanation by developed reasoning considering **two or more** of the identified consequences, supporting them by factual knowledge and understanding.

In addition to a Level 2 response, students make additional developed point(s).

For example, what was important was that the Spanish were beaten. The Spanish Armada was defeated because of the English tactics which worked brilliantly. The fire ships broke up the tight formation of the Spanish fleet and made individual ships vulnerable to attack. The Spanish were constantly

bombarded by the English which made it difficult for them to regroup. The small English ships were more agile and faster than the Spanish and the English had good commanders like Francis Drake.

Level 2: Simple explanation of one consequence **3–4**
Answer demonstrates specific knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Students may progress from a basic explanation by simple reasoning of **one** of the identified consequences, supported by factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, it was important that the Spanish Armada was poorly organised and did not have a good leader in the Duke of Medina-Sidonia who had no experience of the sea. They underestimated the English navy and organised themselves for an invasion but they had bad communications with the Spanish army in the Netherlands.

Level 1: Basic explanation of consequence(s) **1–2**
Answer demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Students identify consequence(s), which are relevant to the question. Explanation at this level is likely to be implicit or by assertion.

For example, the Armada was broken up by the fire ships which were sent into it when it was anchored.

Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question **0**

0 3

Write an account of the threats to the Elizabethan religious settlement in England.

[8 marks]

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target **Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order concepts (AO2:4)**
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied (AO1:4)

Level 4: **Complex analysis of change(s)** **7–8**

Answer is presented in a coherent narrative/account that demonstrates a range of accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Extends Level 3.

Students may progress from a developed narrative of change(s) with complex reasoning supported by a range of accurate and detailed factual knowledge and understanding. For example, an explanation of different impacts/consequences of change in the broader historical context.

For example, the threat to the Elizabethan Church was due to the danger of the involvement of a foreign power, such as Spain, to support a plot against Queen Elizabeth. England could fall under the control of a European Catholic power like Spain. There was also the threat from the extreme Puritans such as Cartwright, and MPs in Parliament who wanted a more extreme Elizabethan Protestant church. They were a threat because they had sympathetic moderate Puritan supporters in the Privy Council.

Level 3: **Developed analysis of change(s)** **5–6**

Answer is presented in a structured and well-ordered narrative/account that demonstrates a range of accurate knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Extends Level 2.

Students may progress from a simple narrative of change(s) with extended reasoning supported by a range of factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, the Catholic plots threatened the religious settlement and perhaps the prospect of civil war. Elizabeth dealt with threats through vigilance and ruthlessness, such as in the Northern Rebellion in 1569, and with the Ridolfi Plot in 1571 when she had her cousin, the Duke of Norfolk, executed and Mary, Queen of Scots, after the Babington Plot in 1586 because she might be used to replace Elizabeth. Elizabeth passed laws that made it difficult for Catholics to organise a plot that would threaten her.

Level 2:	Simple explanation of one change(s) Answer is presented in a structured account that demonstrates specific knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question	3–4
	Students may progress from a basic narrative of change(s) by showing a simple understanding of consequence(s) supported with factual knowledge and understanding. For example, during Queen Elizabeth’s reign there were many plots like Throckmorton’s which wanted to kill Queen Elizabeth and then replace her with another ruler like Mary, Queen of Scots, then change England’s religion from Protestant to Catholic.	
Level 1:	Basic explanation of change(s) Answer is presented in a straightforward account that demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question	1–2
	Students identify a basic narrative of change(s), which is relevant to the question. For example, the threat to the English church came from the Catholics who wanted to kill Queen Elizabeth.	
	Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question	0

Question 04 requires students to produce an extended response. Students should demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

0	4
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‘The main reason for the development of the Elizabethan Country House was to impress.’

How far does a study of **Hardwick Hall** support this statement?

Explain your answer.

You should refer to **Hardwick Hall** and your contextual knowledge.

[16 marks]

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target **Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order concepts (AO2:8)**
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied (AO1:8)

To support their answer students could include aspects of the site such as: location, function, structure, design, people connected with the site, how the site reflects culture, values and fashions of the time and how the site links to important events and/or developments of the specified period.

Level 4: **Complex explanation of cause leading to a sustained judgement** **13–16**
Answer demonstrates a range of accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Answer demonstrates a complex, sustained line of reasoning which has a sharply-focused coherence and logical structure that is fully substantiated, with well-judged relevance.

Extends Level 3.

Students may progress from a developed explanation of cause by analysis of the relationship between them supported by factual knowledge and understanding of the site.

For example, for ordinary people Hardwick was impressive for its size and design. However, for the educated visitor to Hardwick, who could understand the symbolism of the building, they would be impressed by the sophistication of its owner. The symmetry of Hardwick begins with the small windows on the ground floor and progresses upwards to the large windows on the second floor. These represent the need for order with everything in its place as the Great Chain of Being. Movement through the house is a progress along the same lines towards the most high-status rooms – the High Great Chamber. Bess was very fond of needlework and the wall hangings were chosen to allude to classical symbolism and spoke of the Hardwick family ancestry, authority, and

Bess's loyalty to Queen Elizabeth. All of this would impress and be understood by educated visitors.

Level 3: Developed explanation of cause **9–12**

Answer demonstrates a range of accurate knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Answer demonstrates a developed, sustained line of reasoning which has coherence and logical structure; it is well substantiated, and with sustained, explicit relevance.

Extends Level 2.

Answers may suggest that one factor has greater merit.

Students may progress from a simple explanation of consequence to a developed explanation of causes by extended reasoning supported by factual knowledge and understanding of the site.

For example, another reason why Hardwick would impress the visitor was that it showed up the influence of continental fashions in the building and the contents. The loggia was inspired by Italian Renaissance architecture. Originally this was meant to go all the way round the building and thus it would be fashionably symmetrical. Inside Hardwick there are Turkish carpets and French furniture. Bess shared a love of French furniture with Robert Dudley and there were six French chairs that were some of the most ostentatious furniture in the house. But these probably came from Chatsworth. Much of Bess's fashion and style comes from the 1570s when she was married to William Cavendish. There is evidence of Flemish design in the marble used for fireplaces.

For example, another reason why Hardwick demonstrated wealth was because of the vast amount of glass used in the building. Glassmaking got a big boost during Elizabeth's reign. From the 1570s English glass production boomed. By 1590 England was making all its own glass and Hardwick is famed for having, 'more glass than wall.' Bess had her own glass factories. Hardwick used vast amounts of lead, and it was only technical advances from the 1560s in Somerset and Derbyshire with the invention of smelting mills with waterwheel powered bellows and tall chimneys that transformed the industry. This lead was needed for double and triple pile buildings like Hardwick.

Level 2:	Simple explanation of cause Answer demonstrates specific knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question Answer demonstrates a simple, sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, structured, substantiated and explicitly relevant. Students may progress from a basic explanation to a simple explanation of cause by simple reasoning supported with factual knowledge and understanding of the site. For example, Hardwick Hall shows that the owner had great wealth and was of high status because it displayed the fashions of the time in its design. Bess of Hardwick used the most fashionable architect Robert Smythson to design it. It was fashionable for Elizabethan country houses to be symmetrical which Hardwick was, and the chimneys were internal so as not to spoil the symmetry. Some of the windows were false with stone behind them just to keep the symmetry. It was a new fashion because it was not like a medieval house built around a central courtyard.	5–8
Level 1:	Basic explanation of cause Answer demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question Answer demonstrates a basic line of reasoning, which is coherent, structured with some substantiation; the relevance might be implicit. Students recognise and provide a basic explanation of consequence For example, Elizabethan country houses like Hardwick were impressive because they used lots of glass in the many windows. This made the rooms very bright and warm in summer and spring but very cold in the winter.	1–4
	Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question	0