

GCSE History Paper 2

Exam Structure

The Black Death in England

- 6 source based questions

What to do

1. Read background information
2. Read question 1, then read source 1, then answer question 1
3. Read question 2, then read source 2, then answer question 2
4. Carry on till question 6
5. Read question 6, create table and add sources (aim for at least 3 sources on each side)-make a note of 2 examples of sources being reliable or not reliable

e.g. 'Medieval attempts to stop the plague were useless' How far do these sources agree?

Agree	Disagree
Source A, B, C	Source D,E,F

6. Write up ideas and reach conclusion-remember 2 bonus points for referring to reliability, 3 bonus points for SPaG

Types of source questions

Questions about what the sources say

- Use source **and** own knowledge to explain what is going on in the source
- Go for the obvious point

Questions about what you can work out from a source

- Use own knowledge about what you know was going on around the source at the time to explain meaning
- Go for the obvious point

Questions asking you to evaluate the sources

- Refer to the Nature (what is it), Origin (who made it) and purpose (why did they make it) of the source
- Remember all sources are useful to historians

Questions asking you to reach overall conclusion

How far do the sources agree that before Germ theory the government did nothing to improve public health?

- P1-Agree-include at least 3 sources
- P2-Disagree-include at least 3 sources
- Conclusion-What do you think
- NB. 2 bonus points for questioning reliability of 2 sources e.g. this source says this... but it may be unreliable because...

GCSE History Paper 2

Content

The Bubonic Plague (Black Death or Pestilence),

1348

- Arrived in Britain in 1348.
- Caused temperature, fever and vomiting, followed by swelling of the lymph nodes called buboes. These swellings would occur in the neck, armpit and groin.
- Death could happen within a day.
- About 33-50% of Europe's population was wiped out by the plague.
- Bubonic plague was spread by flea bites. This can lead to pneumonic and septicemic plague (always fatal).
- Pneumonic plague is spread by sneezing and coughing.
- Fleas carrying the bubonic plague were carried by rats. When the rats died of plague, the fleas sought new blood supplies.
- People at the time had no idea what caused the plague, how it was spread or how you could cure it.
- Plague broke out again in the Middle Ages, but not with the devastating effects of 1348-50.

Medieval ideas of causes of the plague:

1. Punishment from God;
2. Position of the planets;
3. Bad air (miasma);
4. Jews poisoning the water supply (they were blamed for the plague as scapegoats. Anti-Semitism was very common in medieval Europe);
5. Harmful fumes and vapours emitted during earthquakes or volcanic eruptions;
6. Contagion: the passing of disease by touching the body, clothing or goods belonging to the victim.

Medieval Treatments for the plague:

1. Flagellation – people called flagellants went around Europe whipping themselves to show God they were sorry for people's sins so that God would stop the Plague.
2. Burning Jews alive.
3. Isolate newcomers and people with the plague.
4. Prayer and lighting candles as offerings to God.



Detail from Hartmann Schedel, *Liber primus cum figuris et ymaginibus ab inicio mundi* [the Nuremberg Chronicle] (Nuremberg, 1493), fo. 230^v, Sp. Coll. Euing BD9-a2. By permission of the Librarian, Department of Special Collections, Glasgow University Library.



