4.3 HL Paper 3: comparing Japan and China, and the Paper 3 essay

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 30 marks**

KEY WORDS modernization • comparison • historiography

Objective

Compare the responses of **Japan and China** to Western pressure, 1860–1912, and practise the **Paper 3 essay** (three essays in 2 hours 30 minutes, 15 marks each): planning, using historians and timing.

You must be able to:

- explain why Japan modernized faster than China
- write comparative paragraphs that link both states on one point
- use historians' views to support an argument
- plan a Paper 3 essay in about five minutes
- manage time across three essays

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1 Key knowledge and worked examples

Why did Japan modernize faster?

factor	Japan	China
leadership	a small group of young reformers controlled the central state after 1868	power divided between the court (Cixi) and regional officials
size	about 33 million people (1872), compact	about 400 million, a huge empire
ideas	took Western institutions, not only weapons	"Chinese learning as the base": weapons, not institutions
internal war	the Satsuma Rebellion (1877) ended quickly	the Taiping Rebellion (1850–64) killed tens of millions
foreign pressure	treaties, but no territory lost	defeats, territory lost, indemnities
legitimacy	the emperor was a symbol of national unity	a Manchu dynasty seen by many Han Chinese as foreign

The Paper 3 essay

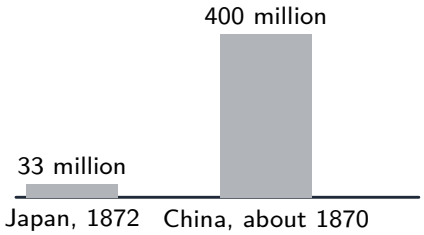
- **2 hours 30 minutes for three essays**: about 50 minutes each, with 5 minutes to plan.
- Answer the question asked; the most common command terms are *to what extent*, *evaluate*, *compare and contrast*, *examine*, *discuss*.
- Use **historians** as part of the argument, not as decoration: "Reischauer's view is supported by…", "Norman's argument is weaker for the economy because…".
- A **conclusion** gives a judgement and answers the question.

Worked comparative sentence. "Whereas the Meiji leaders abolished the domains in 1871 and created one national army, the Qing never removed the regional armies of the Taiping years, so China's military reform stayed divided."

2 Practice

2.1 State **two** differences between the leadership of Meiji Japan and late Qing China. [2]

2.2 Japan had about 33 million people in 1872 and China about 400 million. Calculate how many times larger China's population was, and explain **one** way size made reform harder in China. [3]



2.3 Write **one** comparative paragraph on the role of education in Japan and China, 1860–1912. [4]

2.4 You have 50 minutes for a Paper 3 essay. Make a **plan** for: "Compare and contrast the responses of Japan and China to Western pressure, 1853–1895." Include a thesis, three comparative points with evidence and a conclusion. [6]

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3 Exam-style questions

3.1 *(Paper 3 style.)* "Japan modernized more successfully than China between 1860 and 1912 because of its leadership." To what extent do you agree? [15]



Solutions

Marking: **M1** a correct method, **A1** the correct answer, **B1** an independent mark.

Each answer shows the steps, then the **result**.

2.1

any two: Japan's reformers controlled the central government, while China's power was divided between the court and regional officials; Japan's leaders were young and committed to change, while Cixi and conservatives blocked deep reform; the Meiji emperor was a symbol of unity; the Manchu dynasty was seen by many Han as foreign

2.2

$400 \div 33 \approx$ **12** times; a huge empire was harder to control from the centre, so reforms depended on regional officials; it needed far more money and officials to build schools, railways and an army across the country

2.3

clear comparative point; Japan: national schools from 1872, high literacy, students sent abroad; China: the Confucian exam system kept until 1905; new schools and students abroad (many in Japan) only after 1901; linking words and a judgement, e.g. Japan's earlier reform gave it a skilled workforce a generation sooner

2.4

thesis that answers the question directly; three points, each with precise evidence (dates, names, numbers); a counter-argument with evidence; a judgement that weighs the factors. Example: thesis: both states tried to adopt Western technology, but Japan changed its political institutions and China did not, so only Japan resisted Western pressure by 1895; points: leadership (Meiji oligarchs vs Cixi and regional officials); military reform (national conscript army 1873 vs regional armies and the Beiyang fleet); ideas (Iwakura Mission and constitution vs "Chinese learning as the base"); counter: both kept authoritarian rule; China also built arsenals and shipyards; judgement: the 1894–95 war shows Japan's reforms went deeper

3.1

Mark with the markbands: [13-15] clearly focused on the question, accurate and relevant knowledge used as evidence, well-developed critical analysis, different perspectives evaluated, a reasoned conclusion; [10-12] focused, mostly accurate knowledge, analysis with some evaluation; [7-9] some focus, relevant knowledge, mostly narrative or description with limited analysis; [4-6] little focus, limited knowledge, mostly narrative; [1-3] little understanding of the question. Points that may be included: comparative structure: both states in every paragraph; leadership in Japan: a united group of reformers (Ito Hirobumi, Okubo Toshimichi) after 1868; the Charter Oath; the Iwakura Mission; leadership in China: Cixi's power; regional leaders such as Li Hongzhang; the end of the Hundred Days' Reform (1898); other factors: size and population (about 33 million against about 400 million); internal war: the Taiping Rebellion weakened the Qing far more than the Satsuma Rebellion weakened Meiji Japan; ideas: Japan adopted institutions; China's "Chinese learning as the base" limited change; foreign pressure: China lost more land and paid large indemnities; Japan avoided both; the Tokugawa legacy: high literacy and commercial cities before 1868; historians: e.g. Reischauer on Meiji success; Norman on its authoritarian limits; recent work on the Tokugawa base; conclusion: a judgement, e.g. leadership was decisive because it turned favourable conditions into reform, but conditions in China were much harder

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