

Name: _____ ()

Class: _____

**PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2025
YEAR FOUR (O-levels)
HISTORY PAPER 1
(2174/1)**

Thursday

14 August 2025

1 hr 50min

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Section A: Answer all parts of Question 1.
- Section B: Answer two questions.
- If you use more than one sheet of writing paper, fasten them together. **Attach the answer cover page to the TOP of your answers.**
- Be careful to number all questions attempted correctly.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[50 marks]**.

Section A: _____/30 marks

Section B: _____/20 marks

Total marks obtained: _____ / 50 marks

This question paper consists of **6 pages**, including the cover page.

Section A: Source-Based Case Study

Study the Background Information and the sources carefully, and then answer **all** the questions.

You may use any of the sources to help you answer the questions, in addition to those sources you are told to use. In answering the questions, you should use your knowledge of the topic to help you interpret and evaluate the sources.

- 1 (a)** Study Source A.
What does the advertisement's message reveal about British attitude and its role in the world? Explain your answer. [5]
- (b)** Study Sources B and C.
How similar are these two sources? Explain your answer. [6]
- (c)** Study Source D.
Why did Sir Andrew Clarke write this letter to the Earl of Carnarvon? Explain your answer. [5]
- (d)** Study Sources E and F.
How far does Source F prove that Source E is wrong about the state of internal stability in the Malay states? Explain your answer. [6]
- (e)** Study all the sources.
"The British intervened in Malaya to help the local people." How far do the sources support this view? Use the sources and your knowledge to explain your answer. [8]

Reasons for British Intervention in Malaya

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Read this carefully. It may help you to answer some of the questions.

The British intervention in Malaya in 1874 was driven by a mix of strategic, economic, and local factors. Britain was eager to expand its empire and strengthen its spheres of influence in Southeast Asia to secure trade routes and outpace rival powers. Malaya's rich resources, especially tin and other valuable raw materials, made it an attractive target to fuel Britain's growing industrial economy and demand for cash crops. At the same time, internal instability in states like Perak—marked by the violent Larut Wars between Chinese secret societies and disputes over the royal succession—created disorder that the British claimed justified their involvement to restore peace and stability.

Given these overlapping motives, which of them truly stands out as the main reason for British intervention in 1874?

Source A: *An advertisement for a British soap brand produced in the late 19th century.*



The first step towards lightening
The White Man's Burden
is through teaching the virtues of cleanliness.

Pears' Soap

is a potent factor in brightening the dark corners of the earth as civilization advances, while amongst the cultured of all nations it holds the highest place—it is the ideal toilet soap.

Source B: *The perspective of a Singaporean historian, specializing in British colonial policy and Malayan history, published in 1965.*

British foreign policy had long been based on non-commitment...However, from the 1860's and early 1870's there was a general forward movement by the Dutch in Indonesia and the French in Indochina, a movement that was symptomatic of the new imperialistic spirit which was beginning to be felt at that time. Several forces were at work, both in Southeast Asia and in Britain itself to bring about a change in British foreign policy. In Britain was growing the imperial idea that it was the role of the British empire to lead the world in the arts of civilization, to bring light to the dark places, to teach the true political method... and act as trustee for the weak.

Source C: *An excerpt from Dr. Cowan's 1961 publication, in which the British historian offered a newly accepted view on what mainly drove British involvement in Malaya.*

The decision made by Lord Kimberly in 1873 to take some action in Malaya, and if necessary to intervene in the affairs of the states, was provoked not by conditions in the Peninsula, nor by any consideration of British economic interests there, but by fear of foreign – specifically German-intervention.

Source D: *Sir Andrew Clarke writing to the Earl of Carnarvon, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in 1873 after receiving a formal request from Sultan Abdullah of Perak about problems and unrest in his state.*

...the Malays, like any other rude Eastern nation, require to be treated much more like children, and to be taught... Such teaching can only be done by an officer living on the spot, whose time should be devoted to carefully studying the wants and capabilities of each State, and to make himself personally acquainted with every portion of the country and thus fitting himself for the post of political advisor when the time for the opening up of the country arrives. ...watching the collection of the revenue and controlling its expenditure will form no insignificant part of a Resident's duties...

Source E: *Excerpt from a 2012 journal article by a Malay scholar specializing in Western-centric perspectives and Malay nationalism.*

It is essential to reiterate that there had never been a genuine 'civil war' among the Perak Malays in 1870s until the interference from external parties, which had ulterior motives. Conflicts began to surface involving Raja Abdullah and the headman of Larut, Ngah Ibrahim, as the former tried to seize tin-rich Larut from the latter. There had been no threat to the citizens of Perak, no major bloodshed and certainly no anarchy that would intimidate the political stability of the state. In sum, the 'civil war' and 'anarchy' are just myths invented especially by the British colonial officials to justify their intervention.

Source F: *An excerpt of the comments made by Sir Frank Swettenham published in 'The Singapore Free Press', an English Language newspaper, 1906.*

Every Malay state was torn by conflicts between the rival claimants; the tangle was complicated by quarrels among the Chinese, who were already mining tin in certain districts, and by the incessant attacks of pirates on all... The turbulence of the native states was a constant menace to peace... To Lord Kimberley (Secretary of State for the Colonies) belongs the merit of recognizing that some sort of order must be introduced and suggesting the system of British Residents.

Section B: Essays

Answer **two** questions.

- 2** 'France colonised Vietnam to support the work of the missionaries.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]
- 3** 'The League of Nations failed to achieve collective security in the 1920s because it did not have an army.' How far do you agree? Explain your answer. [10]
- 4** 'British failure to check on the growing power of Germany led to the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

Copyright Acknowledgements:

Source A	https://www.alamy.com
Source B	Chew, E. "The Reasons for British Intervention in Malaya: Review and Reconsideration." <i>Journal of Southeast Asian History</i> 6, no. 1 (1965).
Source C	C. D. Cowan: <i>Nineteenth-century Malaya: the origins of British political control</i> . (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. London Oriental Series, Vol. 11.) vii, 286 pp., 4. Oxford University Press, 1961.
Source D	Mulrooney, David. <i>Imperial Propaganda and Literature: Representing the British Colonial Experience in Malaysia 1895-1940</i> . Harvard University, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, 2019.
Source E	Azmi A, Perak Disturbances 1871-75: British Colonialism, the Chinese Secret Societies and the Malay Rulers, <i>Malaysian Journal of History, Politics & Strategic Studies</i> Vol 39 (I), 2012.
Source F	Newspaper SG online.