Q1. Why was Bengal divided in 1905? (7)
Bengal was a big administrative unit under the British rule had been finally established in India. It began to be felt that Bengal should be split up into two parts for administrative convenience. It was also the first major political crises faced by British after winning the control on subcontinent.
The main reason for the partition of Bengal was that since it was a large province with a population of 85 million people, so it was not possible for one governor to control it. The population of Bengal comprised of both Muslims & Hindus. Among them 58 million was Hindus and 27 million were Muslims. The British claimed that Bengal was too large to govern as one province. It was very hard to rescue public during times famine and plague with poor means of communication. The government realized that it would be more efficient to govern it as two smaller province. In 1903 Viceroy Curzon proposed that Bengal should be partitioned into West Bengal and East Bengal. It was two years before the proposal was put into effect, but in 1905 the British partitioned Bengal as Curzon suggested.

According to Hindu version Bengal was partitioned to weaken the solidarity of Bengali Hindus. Bengal was the hub of creating national awakening posing real threat to the rulers. British played the communal card to widen the hostilities between Hindus and Muslims, division along religious line weakened Congress to curb the growing sense of Hindu nationalism.

Lastly, it was made to address the miseries of Muslims’ sense of deprivation in eastern Bengal. This community was neglected and isolated due to under governance previously. The British wanted to gain the favor of Muslims as the political scenario had been changed. There was an improvement in Muslim British ties.

Q2. Why was the partition of Bengal reversed in 1911? [7]

[Protests and Violence] The partition of Bengal created a Muslim-majority province, the East Bengal. The elite Hindus of West Bengal, who were collecting taxes from Muslim peasants in east Bengal, would now lose their influence in the new province. They, therefore, rejected the decision and launched a series of violent protests and demonstrations against the partition. The tide of anger rapidly spread to other parts of India. The reaction was so strong that it gave birth to the development of extremism. A number of small extremist groups came into existence that launched attacks on the British officials. They succeeded in killing a few ones. Lord Minto, the future viceroy, escaped an assassination attempt. Many extremists were imprisoned for long time, but the situation was alarming to the British. Finally, they had to bow down before the Hindu agitation and thus revoked the Bengal partition.

[Economic Reasons] The British reversed the partition of Bengal due to economic reasons also. The Hindus of West Bengal started Swadeshi Movement, which also spread to other parts of India. It was a massive campaign for boycotting the British goods and using home-made products. The Hindus responded to the movement
enthusiastically. The use of local products became a matter of pride. Foreign clothes were thrown on bonfires. By 1908, imports from Britain had fallen off significantly and sales of British goods in Indian markets dropped drastically. So the British had to reverse the decision.

[British Measures Failed] The British took several measures to bring the situation under control but political unrest kept on growing. Restrictions were imposed on newspapers and public gatherings. Editors were imprisoned. The prisons were filled with revolutionary activists. Tilak was also arrested in June 1908 and put behind the bars for 6 years. Apart from repressive measures, the British turned to reconciliation also by introducing Morley-Minto reforms in 1909 to win support of the Hindus, but the reforms also could not pacify them. The situation was becoming difficult for peaceful administration and ultimately the British had to move towards annulment of the partition.

Q3. ‘Partition or reversal?’ Were the reasons why Bengal was partitioned in 1905 more important than those regarding its reversal in 1911? Explain your answer. [14]

LEVEL 1:
Simplistic statement [1–2] Bengal wanted freedom.

LEVEL 2: Description of partition and/or reversals [3–6] It was too large and Hindus were in the majority and they didn’t want it.

LEVEL 3: Explains reasons for partition OR reversal [7–10]

LEVEL 4: Explains BOTH [9–13]

Partition of the 54 million people in Bengal, 42 million were Hindus. It seemed sensible to divide up the province on religious grounds and also because it was becoming very large and producing significant administrative problems. By doing this it was felt that the province would be easier to administer especially at the time of a new British government in power. The Muslims believed that partition would bring an end to Hindu oppression and that they would enjoy true recognition in a province in which they were in a majority. The Hindus believed that the partition would come about as part of the British ‘divide and rule’ policy which would weaken Hindu unity and its influence in the new East Bengal.

Reversal The Hindus’ objection to Partition was so great that it caused the British to reconsider it. The Hindus opposed it by holding meetings and mass rallies which put pressure on the British government. They thought it was a deliberate attempt to ‘divide and rule’ on the part of the British. The Hindus were so angry that they attempted to assassinate Lord Minto and started their boycott of British goods under the ‘Swadeshi Movement’. There was also an outbreak of terrorist activities.
Q4. ‘The Muslim League was established in 1906 because the Hindus had their own political party.' Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer. [14]

LEVEL 1: Simplistic statement (1–2)

Muslims wanted their own party.

LEVEL 2: Description/identification of reasons (3–6)

The Hindus had the Congress party which represented Hindu views only.

LEVEL 3: Explains at least one factor. (7–10)

LEVEL 4: Explains at least two factors including the Hindu party (9–13)

The Congress was demanding that India should be treated as a cultural and political whole and Hindi should be declared the official language. It was seen as an organization which would only advance Hindu views. Muslim rights would not be advanced if they continued to rely on the Indian National Congress. By not organizing a Muslim group they would continue to be disorganized and disunited. They didn’t feel that had the same influence as Congress with the British. Also the Hindus were beginning to protest against the partition of Bengal and the Muslims saw this as a sign of the influence the Hindus had and they were worried about their own interests. Even more worrying was the growth of extreme Hindu nationalist groups who demanded that Muslims be forcibly converted to Hinduism. Therefore a number of prominent Muslim leaders founded the Muslim League.

LEVEL 5: As Level 4 – also produces a judgement or evaluation. (14) 5: As Level 4 – also produces a judgement or evaluation.

Q5. Was the introduction of the Rowlatt Act in 1919 the sole cause of violence in India during 1919 and 1920? Explain your answer.

LEVEL 1: Simplistic statement [1–2] Yes it was.

LEVEL 2: Identifies reasons for violence [3–6]

Yes because the Rowlatt Act introduced trial without a jury and detention without bail. Another reason for violence was the Amritsar massacre.

LEVEL 3: Explains Rowlatt Act reason OR other reasons [7–10]

LEVEL 4: Explains Rowlatt Act reason AND other reasons [9–13]

The Rowlatt Act This caused uproar in India because it appeared to go against the central principles of British justice: trial by jury and safeguards against illegal imprisonment. The measures were seen as being repressive, especially as people could be made to live in a particular place and were stopped from attending meetings. Strikes and demonstrations took place and the British made the matters worse by introducing further measures such as banning anti-British publications.
The Amritsar massacre:

This occurred in 1919 when a large group of Indians were shot dead and injured, including women and children, for holding an illegal meeting. Although General Dyer was reprimanded for ordering the shooting, his standing in the British media was enhanced which offended Indians and resulted in further violence.

The Government of India Act:

This implemented the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms in 1919, retaining most of the power in India with central government, at a time when Indians following their efforts in the First World War had been expecting greater delegation of power. These measures were opposed, in some cases violently, and a deep mistrust of the British government grew. Fundamentalist groups grew during the early 1920s increasing communal violence between Hindus and Muslims.

LEVEL 5: As Level 4 – also produces a judgement or evaluation [14]

Q6. Was the partition of Bengal the main reason for the formation of the Muslim League in 1906? Give reasons for your answer.

LEVEL 1: Simple statement [1–2]
LEVEL 2: Identifies reasons for partition [3–6]

The partition caused resentment amongst the Hindus.
LEVEL 3: Explains the partition of Bengal reason OR other reasons [7–10]
LEVEL 4: Explains the partition of Bengal reason AND other reasons [9–13]

Partition of Bengal
• Hindus protested against the partition of Bengal - Muslims saw this as a sign of the influence the Hindus had over the British.
• The Muslims started to think about their own survival and political representation.
• Muslims were also increasingly aware that their political rights would not be advanced if they continued to rely on the Indian National Congress.
• By not organising a Muslim group they would continue to be disorganised and disunited over the partition.

Other reasons:
• The growth of a better understanding between the British and Muslims that was reflected in the Simla Declaration in 1905.
In 1905, a new Liberal government had taken office that seemed likely to make changes in political representation, so Muslims felt that they needed their own political party.

The Congress was seen as an organization which would only advance Hindu views as it demanded that India should be treated as a cultural and political whole and Hindi should be declared the official language.

They did not feel they had the same influence as Congress with the British.

The growth of extreme Hindu nationalist groups which demanded that Muslims be forcibly converted to Hinduism.

LEVEL 5:

Q7. Was the partition of Bengal the main reason for the formation of the Muslim League in 1906? Give reasons for your answer.

LEVEL 1: Simple statement [1–2]
LEVEL 2: Identifies reasons for partition [3–6]

The partition caused resentment amongst the Hindus.

LEVEL 3: Explains the partition of Bengal reason OR other reasons [7–10].
LEVEL 4: Explains the partition of Bengal reason AND other reasons [9–13]

Partition of Bengal:

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• The growth of extreme Hindu nationalist groups which demanded that Muslims be forcibly converted to Hinduism.

LEVEL 5: As Level 4 – also produces a judgement or evaluation [14]