
A-level History

7042/2K International Relations and Global Conflict, c1890–1941
Report on the Examination

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Section A

Question 1

There were three elements to this question: an evaluation of provenance and tone, an evaluation of content and argument (both requiring some application of own knowledge) and a judgment. Although these three elements did not need to be addressed in equal measure, and it was sufficient for the judgment to emerge in the conclusion, something of each was expected in answers. Although some did, there is no requirement for students to provide comparative judgment.

Evaluation of provenance and tone was reasonably effective, with most students being able to state something of worth. Less able students often took the provenance of the three sources at face value, asserting that Source A was definitive evidence due to it being an official document, Source B trustworthy as it was a confidential letter not intended for public consumption, and Source C untrustworthy due to it being from a newspaper intended for the public. More able students delved deeper and made comment on the persuasive nature of Source A, the authoritative authorship of Source B, and the Anglo-centric stance of Source C. Comments on tone tended to be descriptive and unrelated to source value. For example, many students alluded to the informal tone of Source B and celebratory tone of Source C without making reference to how the tone of each source impacted on its value.

Students managed the content of the three sources more effectively. Most were able to identify the overarching arguments in each source and most attempted to engage with and evaluate the material, although some did this more successfully than others. Whilst some evaluation was assertive, most students attempted to evaluate the content of the sources using contextual knowledge to both corroborate and criticise the material. In source A, better responses centred upon the Scramble for Africa and Weltpolitik, and the changing balance of power. Good responses to Source B tended to focus in on the difficulties of Anglo-German relations at the turn of the century. With Source C, better students focused their responses upon the very real threat to international stability that existed in 1900, despite the diplomatic end to the Fashoda Incident. Students who used precise knowledge to support comments made on the source as a whole, achieved better than those students who used patchy knowledge to address content through a sentence-by-sentence approach.

In terms of judgment, better students did as asked and commented on the 'value' of the sources as evidence, and provided evaluative summaries of how each would contribute to an understanding of the potential threats to international stability in Europe by 1900 posed by colonial rivalry. Better answers made judgement throughout, although there were some very good responses that dealt with judgment effectively in the conclusion.

Section B

Question 2

This was the most popular of the three essay questions. Whilst there were some good responses, this question was answered ineffectively in the main. Whilst most students dealt competently with German provocation, many failed to provide meaningful comments on British support. This often resulted in rather narrow accounts, preventing students from reaching beyond level 3 on the mark scheme. There is an expectation on the depth paper for students to demonstrate good knowledge, and unfortunately some students failed to provide the range and depth of knowledge required for this question, and accordingly failed to reach beyond level 3 on the mark scheme. Better students

argued that whilst the USA supported Britain, the final justification for intervention was German provocation. In good responses, issues related to support for Britain, such as trading links and shared liberal values were balanced out by issues related to German provocation, such as the sinking of the Lusitania, unrestricted submarine warfare and the Zimmerman Telegram. The more precise the information and the tighter the links to the question, the more likely the answer was to reach the higher mark levels.

Question 3

This was the least popular of the essay questions, and was answered ineffectively by most. Students seemed to either misunderstand what was meant by nationalist ambitions or had inadequate knowledge of the nationalist movements and limited understanding of how these contributed to fall of the autocracies across Europe in 1918. This prohibited some students from reaching beyond level 2 on the mark scheme. However, some students responded well. In relation to nationalist ambitions, more able students tended to focus in on the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, and discuss at length the impact of the pan-Slavic movement, the Young Turks and the rise of Arab nationalism. Better responses provided balance by discussing the impact of war and often reached the judgement that whilst there was a rise in nationalism and a growth in independence movements, it was World War One, particularly in Russia and Germany, which had the greater impact on the decline of autocracy. Less able students, on the whole, dealt with the impact of the war more effectively than the impact of nationalist ambitions. However, there is an expectation on the depth paper for students to demonstrate good knowledge, and disappointingly, as with Question 1, some students knew little about the relevant subject matter, and provided rather confused and inaccurate details about the impact of nationalist ambitions and World War One on the autocratic states.

Question 4

This question was answered more effectively than Questions 2 and 3. Most students had a good to excellent grasp of the subject knowledge necessary to achieve well. There were some descriptive responses, which received less reward than those that adopted a more analytical stance. However, these descriptive responses often comprised impressive knowledge with occasional references to the question and so still managed to reach level 3 on the mark scheme. Most students offered balance but with differing levels of sophistication, with less able students spending far too little time discussing the named factor in the question (British and French responsibility), resulting in uneven balance. However, stronger students adopted a much more even approach in terms of balance and evaluated a range of issues such as attitudes towards the Treaty of Versailles, the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, the failings of the League of Nations, appeasement, the foreign policies of the Fascist powers, the significance of the Great Depression and American Isolationism. Some students failed to keep within the time period stated and made comment on events in Manchuria pre-1933 and events that took place throughout Europe post-1937, notably the Anschluss, and the invasions of Czechoslovakia and Poland. This was deemed irrelevant unless linked to comment on the period 1933-37. Good students often concluded that whilst the Great Depression and Fascist foreign policies contributed to the failure to uphold the post-war peace settlements, Britain and France did little in response and were therefore mainly responsible for the failure.

Use of statistics

Statistics used in this report may be taken from incomplete processing data. However, this data still gives a true account on how students have performed for each question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.