
AS

HISTORY

International Relations and Global Conflict, c1890–1941

7041/2K Great Power rivalries and entry into war, c1890–1917

Report on the Examination

7041

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Section A

Question 01

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 comparison in order to ascertain which was the most valuable source. Although the three elements need not be addressed in equal measure, all areas must be addressed to some degree. It must also be highlighted that the most effective judgements came from those answers which attempted to compare the sources throughout the answer; though this is not an outright requirement as a comparison can be solely offered in a conclusion if desired.

In terms of provenance and tone, stronger answers recognised that Source A may have attempted to make the British economy look in a better state than it was in an attempt to maintain power for the minority government, and that this was reflected in the optimistic tone of the source. Some also recognised that as a government report, facts may have been cherry-picked or glossed over in order to achieve affirmation that their economic policies were successful. Weaker responses often simply stated the provenance or tone of the source without evaluation, or offered only generic statements e.g. as a Conservative report it is biased. Source B on the whole was handled less successfully. Some students pointed out the value of a newspaper from a key industrial area in terms of understanding the position of the British economy and some spotted that a newspaper with liberal interests may be more critical of the situation than Source A. However, as with Source A, many turned to generic and inaccurate statements, for instance stating that newspapers are not valuable as they are just propaganda, or that this was a statement from the Liberal party itself. Unfortunately, there were some responses that gave little attention to provenance and tone or even failed to address provenance entirely; such answers would not be able to move beyond Level 2.

On the whole, students handled content and argument more effectively. Many were able to identify the overarching argument in each source and most students attempted to evaluate the content using contextual understanding in relation to the question. For Source A, a number of responses recognised that the issue of cheap raw materials came as a result of expanding markets and more effective transport in the Empire and the increase in competition and the best answers acknowledged that the concept of a 'Great Depression' was not necessarily accurate. There was some misunderstanding of Source B, with many not grasping the concept of a re-export and the idea that the problem for Britain was that more nations were trading directly with the colonies now that they had made advances in technology; though most recognised that the growth of the USA and Germany seriously threatened Britain's position as a dominant global market. Overall, students who used precise knowledge to support comments made on the source as a whole did better than those who used patchy knowledge to address the source on a sentence by sentence basis.

Most students were aware that they needed to assess which source was most valuable and achieved this by offering a comparison in an overall conclusion. Some of these judgements were not very convincing following misunderstandings regarding the provenance and content of Source B, with a number of responses claiming that Source A was simply the more reliable source being from the government rather than a newspaper. The most able students recognised that the newspaper article appeared to offer a more balanced review of the economy and may therefore be seen as more valuable given the potential motives of the Royal Commission in Source A.

Section B**Question 2**

No students attempted to answer this question.

Question 3

All students choose to address this question, though with varying degrees of success. Most responses recognised that the 'blank cheque' was Germany's unconditional support of Austria-Hungary in the aftermath of the assassination, and many understood that it was likely this support that gave Austria-Hungary the confidence to stand strong against Serbia. Most answers offered balance with the role of the alliance system, with the strongest answers showing how the Balkan situation would have likely remained a localised conflict without the domino effect of the competing alliances. However, a number of responses struggled to stick to the focus of the 'outbreak of war', tending to discuss the wider causes of the war in terms of long-standing tensions stemming back into the 19th Century; the weaker answers simply described events like the Moroccan Crises and Naval Race rather than looking at why war broke out in August 1914 and struggled to get beyond Level 2. There were also some key inaccuracies in understanding and chronology, therefore those responses which offered precise detail and a tight focus were the ones attaining Level 4 and above.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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