
A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/20 Democracy and Nazism: Germany, 1918-1945
Report on the Examination

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General

Overall, students were able to tackle the paper well, completing all three questions, often at length. The questions, both the compulsory source and the essays gave the students the opportunity to write balanced and well-supported answers.

Many students showed a good level of knowledge and understanding of the periods examined in the paper, although I would remind centres at this point that the compulsory source question needs to be tackled in a way that goes beyond comprehension and that, for a depth paper, relevant and meaningful own knowledge is required to access the higher levels. On the other hand, students who performed quite well on question 01 did not necessarily do as well on the essay questions, suggesting perhaps, that some students are more at ease with the prompts provided by the sources and find the more open-ended aspects of the essays more challenging. Questions 02 and 03 on the impact of the Versailles Treaty and on the extent of legality of the Nazi consolidation of power respectively were the more popular essay choices but those who did tackle 04 on the war economy produced some very strong responses. Students who were able to give precise supporting evidence required by a depth paper as well as showing balance and a line of argument that enabled substantive judgements to be made produced very strong answers. Less effective answers showed some knowledge but a lack of cohesion in terms of the focus on the question.

Question 01

Many students had some good knowledge and understanding of Nazi policies towards the workers and were able to deploy this effectively. Good answers were able to identify the overall argument of each source and the overall emphasis on each which could then be used to more effectively identify and analyse provenance. The key focal point of 01 is on value and students do need to link more clearly comments on tone and provenance to the overall emphasis of the sources which can then facilitate a more developed discussion of this to the value of the source. Generalised comments on A not being valuable as it is from the German Labour Front Leader, Robert Ley, or that B is not valuable because it is from Sopade do need some further development if they are to give a clear judgement on the value of the source. Many answers do now seem to follow a standardised format where the tone and provenance are dealt with but not really used as part of a wider argument on value. In terms of content, there is often good understanding of the arguments in the sources and some valid comment on the value of those arguments. However, good answers need to go beyond simply commenting on the points made and judge their value by bringing in relevant and appropriate contextual own knowledge. Being a depth paper, there is a clear expectation that students should be assessing the value of these sources partly by the use of their own knowledge linked to the arguments and provenance contained in the three sources.

Some students wrote introductions and conclusions and also attempted to compare the sources, which is not required for this question. Some weaker answers tried to criticise the extracts for what they omitted rather than for the arguments they offered and this approach made it difficult to draw any meaningful judgements. The best responses included summary judgements after each extract and this meant that a final concluding paragraph was not needed.

Question 02

This was a popular essay question and the vast majority of the students showed that it was clearly a topic which was very familiar. Students were, on the whole, knowledgeable on the impacts of the Versailles Treaty and good answers were able to identify, analyse and formulate judgements on the extent of political and economic damage caused and which was more devastating. Strong answers also were able to show understanding that these were not parallel consequences and instead were inextricably linked. There was some very good discussion of how they were linked and how this affected judgements on the question's focus. Weaker answers found the political damage aspect of the question more challenging and veered into either international aspects or veered outside the timeframe of the question, e.g. blaming Versailles for the Spartacist Revolt even though it pre-dated the Treaty. Some answers did confuse the Treaty with the Armistice and there was also some confusion on hyperinflation and its relationship with the Ruhr Crisis. Finally, there was a marked reluctance to take the answer up to 1924, although this date had fundamental importance when assessing the level of economic and political damage.

Question 03

This was also a popular question, although it was not answered as well as question 02. Weaker answers simply wrote a descriptive and narrative response on Hitler's consolidation of power and gave only a cursory glance to the focus of how far it was carried out legally. Some weaker responses also wrote considerably on Hitler's rise to power rather than focusing on his consolidation. However, the main issue with some of the answers to this question was the assumption that the use of terror was always illegal. This sometimes led to somewhat flawed balance as students failed to recognise the importance of the Emergency Decree which followed the Reichstag Fire, which suspended many constitutional rights and enabled a campaign by the State against opponents, especially the Communists. Students were on far surer ground when identifying and explaining the legal measures taken such as the Enabling Act and the laws which followed, cementing Hitler's power and also on identifying the Night of the Long Knives as a clearly illegal act. Stronger answers were then able to grapple with the idea of quasi legality which could be used to describe much of the way Hitler consolidated his power, including the intimidation deployed to get the Enabling Act through and the use of plebiscites to justify his actions.

There were some good answers here from students who understood the clear focus of this question, which did prove to be a challenge for many. Those who focused on the extent of legality throughout were able to write good answers.

Question 04

This was the least popular essay choice on the paper but was answered very well by many of the students who tackled it. Weaker answers did show a lack of clear knowledge of this topic and instead gave vague responses which did not get to the heart of the issues, especially during World War Two. Less effective responses went far too far back and lost focus on the economy during the war with some answers going as far back as the Great Depression and mefo bills during Schacht's New Plan. Answers which focused on Goering's Four Year Plan and Speer's role from 1942 were far more focused and relevant.

There was plenty of material which could be deployed by students to give a balanced and focused response, using selective and precise evidence from both Speer's time in charge and what he was

up against in terms of allied bombing, the growing power of the allies as well as ideological challenges on the use of women in work, and also to how effective Goering was in achieving the aims of the Four Year Plan. Some students were clearly very well prepared for this topic with some excellent use of evidence to assess how well the economy was adapted and then using these supported arguments to formulate substantiated judgements.

The ability to select and deploy accurate and precise supporting detail in support of arguments was a key factor that differentiated between the weak, average and very good essays. A number of students need to be reminded that all essay answers require argument and a balanced appraisal and that one-sided answers, or answers that do not attempt to address the full time period in question, will not reach the higher mark ranges.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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