
A-level History

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

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General

Overall, students have responded well to the new demands of the A-level exam paper. Students were able to write at great length and both types of question, extract and essay, enabled students to present rounded responses.

Many students were able to demonstrate a good understanding of the period and displayed an impressive grasp of content and precise detail, as is needed in a depth paper. The essay question on the instability of Weimar governments being primarily caused by the Weimar Constitution (Q.02) was more popular than the other essay questions on Weimar's economic and political stability between 1923 and 1925 (Q.03) and on continuity and change in Hitler's policies towards the Jews (Q.04). Whilst, on the whole, students displayed a secure understanding of content, fewer were able to select appropriate and relevant evidence in support of an analysis that was closely focused on the questions posed, especially for the extract question. As a depth paper, the more successful students demonstrated a close understanding and analysis of periods with a limited timeframe.

Section A

01

Some students had very detailed and thorough knowledge of opposition to the Nazi regime, although they were, at times, less secure on the 1934-37 timeframe. Whilst better responses considered the interpretation of each extract as a whole and focused on the question posed, some students became side-tracked into explaining everything mentioned in the passages, regardless of their relevance to the overall interpretations. Good answers moved from an overall summary to a breakdown of the interpretation given in each extract, in relation to its key themes. The best responses were able to identify the overall arguments presented in each extract, with the weaker responses adopting a line-by-line approach. Some students attempted to compare the extracts, which is not required for this question. Strong answers gave clear and supported provenance and tone, as well as emphasis, and linked them closely to value. As a depth paper, this focus on value has to be supported with some contextual own knowledge of substance to ensure that answers do not fall into the category of being too generalised. For example, in A, there are clear reasons given in the SOPADE report for the weak opposition such as effective use of terror and propaganda as well as a lack of unity amongst the opposing groups; there is, therefore, plenty of opportunity here for students to focus on the value of this source with supporting own knowledge. Too many less able students tried to criticise the extracts for what they omitted rather than for the interpretations 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.

Section B

02

This was a popular essay question. Stronger responses provided a balanced assessment and argued how important the Constitution was, in relation to a range of other factors, in producing instability of Weimar Governments. The best responses were able to argue meaningfully how the different aspects of the Constitution such as the use of Proportional Representation and Article 48 made stable government difficult but were also able to link this clearly to the 1919-23 period. These answers were then able to argue whether other factors were as or more important than the Constitution. One-sided answers unfortunately were unable to access higher levels of the mark

scheme whereas students who were able to produce balanced answers with clear links and judgements scored well.

03

There were some good answers to this question from students who understand the clear focus of this question which did prove to be a challenge for many. Able students were able to focus in on the need to examine the extent of Stresemann's role in achieving both economic and political stability between 1923 and 1925. Too many students reverted to 'Golden Age' answers and took at face value that Stresemann was solely responsible. These answers also found it difficult to stay within the narrow timeframe of the question, as is necessary in a depth paper and many veered into foreign policy too often and made only very basic links to the question. Also, many students debated Stresemann's effectiveness and level of success rather than the extent of his role and therefore did not address the full demands of the question. Finally, students were far less secure on the political stability aspect of the question than the economic one. Conversely, those students who were able to show precise focus and clear balance, through assessing the role of Schacht or Dawes for achieving economic stability, or the role of Hindenburg or Ebert when analysing the reasons for political stability, or linking the two themes together, scored very highly. Many students were able to make clear judgements and sustain an analysis with appropriate supporting evidence.

04

The quality of answers for this question was mixed. Strong answers were able to focus on the themes of change and continuity and also to show range between 1938 and 1945 as the question required. These answers were able to use clear evidence and examples to build an argument, mostly starting with the Anschluss and Kristalnacht, which debated where the policies towards the Jews changed or whether they generally stayed the same up to 1945. Unfortunately, some answers to this question took an overly narrow view and failed to venture beyond the Wannsee Conference of 1942 or wrote generalised answers on Nazi policies towards the Jews without focusing on change or continuity. Better answers managed to link policies towards the Jews to the changing fortunes in the war and contrasted change, because of aspects such as defeat at Stalingrad, to aspects of policy which fundamentally remained the same.

The ability to select and deploy accurate and precise supporting detail in support of arguments were key factors 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 will not reach the higher mark ranges.

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.