

HISTORY: WORLD AFFAIRS 1917-1991

Paper 2158/01

Paper 1

Key messages

- Answer each part of every question. Lots of marks will be lost if you do not.
- Stick to the dates in questions. Marks cannot be given for material on events before or after the given period.
- The second part of a question requires analysis. Description will not score many marks.

General

A good proportion of the candidates presented work that showed they had studied carefully for this syllabus. At the other end, however, some presented work that could only score very low marks.

The work of the better candidates was characterised essentially by well held knowledge, supported by a good sense of understanding. This was conveyed in well structured, well angled and well supported answers that scored highly as a consequence. There was also orderly layout and development of the answers along the lines indicated by the set questions. The work of those candidates who could not be classified with a grade in this examination was at times incoherent, merely copying out phrases from the paper and linking them together with no purpose. Others who were weak did make a viable attempt at the set questions, but were held back by thin knowledge and/or weak understanding of it. Such candidates might therefore direct an answer in a reasonably purposeful way, but were unable to sustain it with strength of factual support or understanding. Candidates need to be assured that for success in this examination they must be prepared with well held knowledge of twentieth-century world history if they are to achieve the success they seek. Additionally, they must be willing to deploy that knowledge with good judgement in the light of question requirements.

Two main problems caused the marks on many scripts to be severely depressed:

- (i) many candidates did not answer the second, analytical, part of some questions. This applied to many whose answer to the first part was often good. The question instruction is clear so marks were being thrown away.
- (ii) many either did not read the question closely or ignored the wording. This applied especially to start and end dates in questions. Candidates repeatedly ignored the dates given and wrote often at length but irrelevantly outside the period specified.

Comments on Specific Questions

Some questions attracted few if any answers so feedback is possible only of the following questions:

Section A

- 1 Some confused the treaties. Many seemed not to know Neuilly or Sevres at all. Many did not know the correct details. Quite a few included terms from the Treaty of Versailles. In the second part, many simply listed some of Wilson's 14 Points without link them to the treaties. The syllabus is very clear that the second part of a question requires analysis, not description.
- 2 Candidates often went into the 1930s in the first part of the question, especially on Japan and Manchuria, and then in the second part concentrated on the period after 1936 (i.e. Hitler and Austria, the Sudetenland and Poland). Equally, some discussed events pre-Versailles.
- 3 Candidates were quite good when answering parts (a) and (b), but answers were thin for part (c).

Section B

- 7 This was very popular and some very good answers were read. On the other hand, many answers took little account of the dates 1919-25. There was a lot on Mussolini's early life and career. Then, especially in the second part, answers were filled with details of actions and events after 1925. This invariably prevented higher marks in the second part.
- 8 Candidates often neglected to link their descriptions in **(a)** and **(b)** to the rise of Hitler. The second part was quite poorly done because most answers concerned Nazi Germany after the Nazis came to power, whereas this question was concerned with 'the origin and rise to power'.
- 11 Many good answers were given for the first part, although some confused the Berlin Blockade and the Berlin Wall. Both knowledge and analysis were very weak on the second part. Most showed no understanding of the political situation in West Germany.

Section C

- 12 Nearly all answers ignored 'greedy and prejudiced' and just described the USA in the 1920s, in the course of which they often unwittingly linked events to race, immigration and speculation, so marks did not come out too badly.
- 13 This was the best answered question on the whole paper. Good knowledge was shown of his policies and of the opposition.

Section D

- 17 Many answers to both parts were often a bit of a jumble and showed lots of confusion. The main problem was not keeping to Feb-Oct of 1917 especially important in **(b)** where Examiner often got the initial involvement in the war with the Tsar and even Rasputin taking Centre stage. Candidates seemed to know little about the Petrograd Soviet. Most talked only about the Bolsheviks.
- 18 Both **(a)** and **(b)** were quite well known but not the others so most candidates had one weak section here. Candidates generally guessed at an answer to the second part and got a few marks as a result. There was little indication that candidates had studied this topic.

Section E

- 23 Those who attempted this question knew a little of Suez, but their knowledge seemed inadequate for the question, suggesting that they should not have picked it.

Section F

- 27 Part **(a)** was not known while part **(c)** produced good detailed answers. In the second part, candidates did not keep to the 1940s and answers often referred to the 1930s and then the amount on the 1940s was short and unproductive.
- 28 Most candidates went beyond 1941 and although this did not cause them to lose marks directly, it often wasted their time or, worse, meant that description of the 1930s was thin. Some only included Manchuria when considering the 1930s.
- 30 The small number who answered this question wrote excellent, very full answers.