



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCE

In History (8HI0/1G)

Paper 1: Breadth study with interpretations

Option 1G: Germany and West Germany,
1918-89

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8HI0 1G

Section A

Question 1.

Question 1 asked candidates to consider whether the nature of the Weimar constitution was the main reason for the weakness of the Weimar Republic in the years 1919-33. This was the more popular question in section A.

Most candidates were able to offer aspects of the constitution that may have brought weaknesses such as proportional representation and the overuse of Article 48, and the problems of coalition government.

More developed responses sometimes argued that factors such as proportional representation was not in itself the weakness, but rather the sectional and conflictual nature of the parties were at fault. The newness of democracy to Germany was also considered and then linked to factors such as the Treaty of Versailles and the criticism of politicians associated with the post-war settlement.

Candidates were able to argue effectively that the constitution was the main weakness and offer analysis of other contributing factors. Candidates sometimes cited the Stresemann period as evidence that the constitution in itself was not the main weakness but events such as the 1923 crisis and the Wall St Crash had devastating effects on political stability and the rise of extremism.

Less successful candidate tended to offer a narrative of the main events that impacted Weimar, and often focussed on the events in the first part of the time frame.

Question 2.

Question 2 asked candidates to consider whether the punishment of opposition and dissent was the main reason for the stability of the Nazi regime in the years 1933-45.

Candidates were able to consider how punishments of opposition and dissent aided the stability of the Nazi regime through terror. Particularly noted was the use of the Gestapo and the fear they could instil. Candidates generally had good knowledge of what happened in concentration camps and understood that the main victims of terror were the Nazi's political opponents.

The removal of opposition within the party was mentioned by some and how this was eliminated in the 'Night of the Long Knives'.

Opposition from the left was mentioned quite widely but less so trade unions or religious opposition. A few candidates were able to look at the intensification of terror in the war years and how that maintained 'stability' as defeats on the eastern front mounted.

At the top end candidates were able to weigh the use of terror against other factors. Propaganda was correctly shown to be the other side of the coin to terror, but some consideration was also given to economic stability and the encouragement offered by social policies such as awarding medals to mothers for the number of children they bore.

Less successful candidates failed to engage with 'stability' but were generally able to offer something on the terror state. A few candidates saw the question as simply how Hitler secured his position and neglected the punishment aspect.

Section B

Question 3.

Question 3 asked candidates to consider the extent to which education in the Weimar Republic was similar to education in the FRG.

Candidates could generally cite some examples of similarities such as both regimes followed a war, so faced dealing with how to teach about recent history, especially in the FRG. The regional differences in provision due to the control of education by the Länder was correctly cited as an ongoing similarity. Religious schools tended to be considered in Weimar but less so in the FRG, unless to mention the need for Muslim schools to aid the children of guest workers.

At the top end candidates picked out social class as a determinant of provision and successfully linked education to political ideology, e.g. liberal and conservative views about education for women, and were able to compare provision in both periods.

Less successful candidates failed to focus on the similarity / difference demands of the question, and tended to offer something from one or other of the two periods. Most knew about the de-Nazification of the curriculum in the FRG.

Question 4.

Question 4 asked candidates to consider whether the ‘economic miracle’ (1955-66) was the most significant feature of the economy in the years 1945-89. This was the more popular question in section B and it produced some very good responses.

Candidates were generally able to give some examples from the period 1955-1966 such as providing material for the world market following the lifting of the ban on arms production. Writing across the period was sometimes neglected with the latter period being more commonly missed out.

Some candidates were able to mention Konrad Adenauer and Ludwig Erhard as aiding the ‘economic miracle’. The growth in exporting as a factor in contributing to this and the role of guest workers in providing a cheaper labour force and aiding production.

Most candidates were able to consider other factors such as international support and Marshall Aid that provided the base for the ‘economic miracle’. The social market economy was explained well by candidates at the top end, and the importance of economic integration into the EEC was generally analysed.

Other significant feature of the economy of the FRG usually included the crises in the 1970s and 1980s, e.g. the oil crisis in 1973, and candidates tended to explain how these were dealt with as a significant success.

Less successful candidates struggled in covering the time frame and tended to focus on one or other feature of the 1950s with the role of guest workers proving popular.

Section C

Question 5.

Question 5 asked candidates use the extracts and their own knowledge to consider the view that Hitler invaded Poland because he wanted to fight a general European war. The extracts from Gordon Craig and Karl Dietrich Bracher proved to be accessible to the vast majority of candidates. The interpretation in Extract 1: that Hitler invaded Poland in the sure knowledge that it could lead to a general European war, and that he could use this to defeat Britain and France. Contrasted with the interpretation in Extract 2: that Hitler thought that Britain and France would continue to appease him if he invaded Poland, and that he was optimistic that he might ‘get away with it’.

Candidates generally framed their answers in terms of intentionalism versus structuralism, and were able to pick out supporting evidence from the extracts.

At the top end candidates selected points of interpretation from the extracts and developed the rival interpretations through the deployment of well-selected evidence and arguments from their own knowledge. For example, the part played by appeasement in encouraging Hitler's demands, and his ideology involving racial conquest and *Lebensraum*. This allowed the development of an analysis based on the interpretations and a sustained judgment.

In levels 2 and 3 candidates tended to explain the meaning of the extracts and opt in favour of one or the other without development of the rival interpretations. Some were unsure what was meant by a 'general European war'.

Less successful candidates tended to offer paraphrases from the extracts and generally failed to integrate their own knowledge with the material in the extracts.