



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel

In GCE History (8HI0/1G)

Advanced Subsidiary

Paper 1: Breadth study with interpretations

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

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Section A

Question 1 asked candidates to evaluate whether economic challenges were the main reason for the eventual collapse of the Weimar Republic between 1919 and 1933.

This was the more popular choice in Section A and was generally accessible to most candidates, who were able to engage with the question's focus.

Candidates typically identified a range of economic issues that contributed to Weimar's downfall.

Stronger responses demonstrated sound knowledge of the impact of World War I and the resulting debt. The most effective answers built on this by including detailed references to the hyperinflation triggered by the Ruhr crisis and the consequences of the Wall Street Crash.

Many candidates made connections between economic instability and other factors undermining the Republic's stability, such as the humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles and its role in fuelling support for extremist parties.

Most candidates concluded that while economic crises formed a significant backdrop, it was the rise of the Nazis and Hitler's decisive leadership that ultimately led to Weimar's collapse.

Level 3 responses often focused too heavily on hyperinflation and neglected the period from 1930 to 1933, limiting their engagement with the Republic's final collapse.

Less successful answers tended to present a narrative of key events and simply asserted the importance of one factor without sufficient analysis.

Question 2 asked candidates to consider whether censorship and propaganda were the main reasons for Nazi success in controlling the German population between 1933 and 1945.

Most candidates were able to provide examples of censorship and propaganda and reach a judgement on their role in controlling the population.

Some argued that the establishment of the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda highlighted the importance of these tools. These candidates supported their points with evidence of Joseph Goebbels' role and the harsh prescriptions introduced through the Editors' Law of 1933.

The use of radio, particularly the people's receiver, was another common example that allowed candidates to explore both censorship and propaganda, demonstrating how these methods were used to influence and control public opinion. Stronger responses showed detailed knowledge of the named factor across the full period, including some coverage of the war years.

The most common counterargument was the use of terror, with many candidates showing good understanding of the role played by the Gestapo and SD. Many candidates also referred to aspects of Nazi domestic policy that contributed to popular support, such as the reduction in unemployment. Many responses reflected the indicative content outlined in the mark scheme.

Level 3 responses tended to show limited understanding of censorship and propaganda. These candidates often focused on policies affecting women and minorities, arguing that such policies instilled fear and obedience, but without clearly linking them to the question's focus on censorship and propaganda.

Less successful responses often lost sight of the question's focus on 'controlling the German people', instead presenting a broad overview of Nazi policies without reference to the specified time frame.

Section B

Question 3 asked candidates to evaluate the extent to which improved living standards were the most significant outcome of German economic activity between 1945 and 1989.

Most candidates were able to engage with the question effectively, assessing whether the premise was fully accurate, partially accurate, or inaccurate. Many also identified alternative significant outcomes of economic activity during the period.

Several responses outlined the start of the post-war period, including the role of Marshall Aid in initiating economic recovery. Candidates commonly developed this by discussing the rebuilding of the economy and the repair of war damage, particularly through house-building programmes that contributed to improved living conditions. Some candidates also referenced the Korean War as a catalyst for economic growth, which in turn supported rising employment and living standards.

Candidates were generally able to link improved living standards to developments in the 1960s, citing increased access to consumer goods such as fridges, televisions, and washing machines. The wider availability of household appliances, cars (such as Volkswagens), and opportunities for holidays were used to show improved living standards.

A few candidates noted the role of Ludwig Erhard's inclusion of trade unions in the Social Market Economy, highlighting its impact on wages and overall economic performance.

Stronger responses (Level 4) maintained a clear focus on the **outcomes** of economic activity, while Level 3 responses tended to concentrate more on the **causes** of improved living standards.

Less successful candidates often described features of the economy without linking them to outcomes. Some attempted comparisons with the Weimar period, which were generally not relevant to the question.

Question 4 asked candidates to assess how accurate it is to say that the role and status of women in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) differed from that in the Weimar Republic.

Responses to this question were varied, and it appeared to be the more challenging of the Section B questions. While many candidates focused more on similarities than differences, most were able to offer a reasonable comparative analysis.

Nearly all candidates identified at least one similarity and one difference between the two periods. A common and well-handled comparison was between the 'new woman' of the Weimar era and women in the FRG. Some candidates explored the influence of American culture in both periods, which proved to be a productive area for comparison.

Another frequently cited difference was the greater proportion of women involved in politics during the Weimar Republic, where women made up around 10% of parliamentarians—a level not reached in the FRG until 1983. Some candidates referred to individual female politicians, such as Clara Zetkin, and demonstrated knowledge of their contributions.

Fewer candidates discussed the greater percentage of women employed in industry during the Weimar period. Instead, most focused on the shared societal expectations in both eras, particularly the role of women as wives and mothers. Some added that married women in the FRG did not gain the legal right to work without their husband's permission until 1977. Many candidates argued that discrimination and unequal pay were a feature across both periods.

Many responses cited the similarities in the constitutions of the Weimar Republic and the FRG, both of which included rights to vote, work, and access education. However, candidates also added that conservative attitudes prevailed in both periods. In the FRG, these attitudes were seen as influenced by the lingering effect of Nazi-era propaganda about women's roles. Hence traditional attitudes were common in both periods.

Some candidates argued that women in both periods campaigned for sexual equality, though it was suggested that women in the FRG had greater opportunities to do so due to increased economic and political stability.

Less successful responses struggled to provide sufficient evidence for comparison and tended to describe isolated aspects of women's lives in only one of the two periods.

Section C

Question 5 asked candidates use the extracts and their own knowledge to consider the view that Hitler took Germany to war because he misunderstood British foreign policy.

The extracts from Tim Mason and Christian Leitz proved to be accessible to most candidates. Extract 1 argued that Hitler's personality was a decisive factor in leading Germany to war, particularly due to his failure to grasp the aims of British foreign policy—namely, Britain's commitment to maintaining a balance of power in Europe and its unwillingness to tolerate continued German expansion. Many candidates understood this interpretation, and some identified it as an intentionalist view.

Most candidates were able to contrast this with Extract 2, which was sometimes labelled structuralist. This extract suggested that Germany's path to war was shaped by the support and involvement of figures within the German military-industrial complex. Candidates generally understood this interpretation and were able to use it as a basis for comparison.

Both extracts provided opportunities for candidates to develop the competing interpretations using their own knowledge.

Stronger responses selected key points from the extracts and developed them with well-selected evidence and arguments from their own knowledge, demonstrating a clear understanding of the historiographical debate.

Level 3 responses typically explained the meaning of the extracts and opted for one interpretation over the other, without development of the alternative view.

Less successful candidates tended to paraphrase the extracts without analysis and generally failed to integrate their own knowledge with the material in the extracts.

