

Examiners' Report January 2013

GCSE History 5HA02 2A

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Introduction

Although performance on this year's paper was of a similar standard to that seen last year, there were a number of questions where the topic considered seemed to catch out a number of candidates. On Q1b there was confusion between the Weimar 'Constitution' and the Weimar 'Government'. Equally, on Q1c some candidates did not know about the Dawes Plan and confused it with the Treaty of Versailles. Both the Weimar Constitution and the Dawes Plan are identified in the amplification of content within the specification. It might be of value for centres to suggest to candidates that, as part of their final revision, they check that they are familiar with all the things listed in that amplification.

On other questions, however, performance was much stronger and there was impressive knowledge of Germany's post-war economic problems, Hitler's measures to control opposition and Nazi social policies. Where candidates were able to apply and explain their knowledge, as opposed to merely demonstrating it, there were some excellent responses.

There are a number of areas that centres might like to consider from this year's paper:

On Q1a there was a tendency this year for some candidates to provide an inference that was, in fact, a paraphrase of what the source said. They need to take care to ensure they are inferring, not just rewording.

Candidates should also take note of any dates given in questions. These are often provided to help candidates by showing where they should start and/or finish their answer. So in Q1d candidates were asked to write about economic policies only in the period 1919–23. Equally, in Q2b, the period considered was restricted to the years 1933–4. Any material provided from outside the dates given is not rewarded.

It is pleasing to see centres working to improve their candidates' exam technique, but there is increasing evidence that, in places, such an approach may be counter-productive. In Q1c and Q1d, and in particular in Q3a and Q3b, candidates are using phrases designed to gain them access to the highest levels of the mark scheme, but that might actually prevent them from explaining their thinking more clearly. So on Q1c and Q1d there were numerous examples of candidates asserting 'this links with' without any attempt made to show a link or explain the connection between the two points. In Q3a and Q3b, some candidates attempt to prioritise stating that 'The most important reason was... The second most important reason was...' without any justification for these assertions. Perhaps such candidates might be better directed to explaining their answer more deeply. Often assertions of linkage or relative importance restrict an answer to Level 2, when higher reward might have come with deeper explanation.

This year saw the introduction of marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) on Q2 and Q3. Centres need to ensure that candidates are aware of the awarding of such marks and how important they can be in determining final grades. On this paper, some seven marks can be awarded and so rigorous attention to detail in terms of SPaG (including the clear communication of meaning) is very important. Candidates should also realise that if they fail to produce rewardable material on Q2 or Q3, their SPaG mark will be zero, along with their mark for History.

Question 1(a)

Examiners were surprised to see a larger number than usual of candidates operating at Level 1 in this question. The source did not seem more difficult than in previous years, but there was a noticeable increase in inferences which were, in reality, just paraphrases of the source. There were many references to Jews and Communists being blamed, which fell into this category.

Where successful inferences were made, they tended to be around general unhappiness or an inability to accept defeat and consequent desire to find a scapegoat.

From the source you can learn the Germany were unhappy, the text says 'it was an unfair, dictated peace' this is showing that Germany believed they had been treated harshly ~~as they have~~ after the war, through the Treaty of Versailles as well as other things. It also shows that they wanted to do something about it.



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

This answer shows good technique by making the inference in the first sentence ('they were unhappy') and then supporting that belief by quoting the German views on the Treaty of Versailles. A top level mark was awarded.



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

Be very careful to avoid making what you think is an inference, but is really just putting what the source says in your own words. Saying that the Germans blamed the Jews and Communists for defeat is really just another way of saying they 'had been let down by them'.

Question 1(b)

Although weaknesses in the Constitution are detailed in the amplification of content some candidates could not answer this question. There were numerous blank responses and a large number of answers on the problems of the Weimar Government (the Treaty of Versailles, reparations, Spartacists, Kapp Putsch), rather than the problems inherent in the Constitution.

Candidates who did tackle the question in the appropriate manner generally scored well, with development of the problems created by proportional representation and Article 48 often leading to full marks.

The weaknesses of the Weimar Constitution were that:

Firstly due to proportional representation very few laws got passed as this system meant there was many small parties and so ~~majority~~ there was rarely a majority vote. This made Weimar weak as it could not always pass its laws.

Secondly Article 48 meant that the president could pass laws without permission from the Reichstag. In an emergency this made Weimar weak as it did not state ~~the~~ what an emergency was and so when Weimar couldn't decide on a law the president ~~could~~ would have to pass it and this led to the system being abused for example: Hitler's rise to power



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

This answer develops two features (proportional representation and Article 48) and therefore reaches Level 2.



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

Examiners are looking for two features. So candidates should decide what those features are and provide as much detail in support of each as they can.

Question 1(c)

Examiners noted that there were also a surprising number of blank responses to this question. The Dawes Plan is in the amplification of content too, so perhaps the candidate who wrote 'whoops, I forgot to revise this' may provide a clue as to why some candidates couldn't provide a response.

However, there were many good answers explaining the economic effect of the plan (though sometimes confusing it with the Young Plan) and a good number of Level 3 responses. Such answers could see how the Dawes Plan helped bring about a period of genuine stability, brought greater support for the Weimar government, or led to Germany rejoining the 'international family'. Some candidates also explained that the Dawes Plan might have had immediate beneficial effects, but in the long-term led to a dangerous reliance on the USA.

As mentioned in the general introduction, some candidates' answers suffered from a liberal sprinkling of linking terms, such as 'this links with', without ever showing how such linkage could be demonstrated.

One effect of the Dawes plan, created in 1924 on Germany is that international relations improved. Within the Dawes Plan, Germany came to an agreement with American banks, meaning the relationship between America and Germany was improving. It also improved international relations between the two because after the Dawes Plan, Germany was reliant on American loans and so it was important that Germany kept the peace with America for the sake of improving German problems.

Another effect of the Dawes Plan on Germany was that there was an increase on economy. Through American banks loaning Germany money, this released spending power meaning that the German economy was getting better, there was an improvement with imports and exports with other countries (also improving international relations) as well as Germany slowly but surely start to pay back the reparations that were given to Germany through the Treaty of Versailles.

A final effect of the Dawes Plan on Germany was that there was an increase in employment.

The German government now had the money to pay workers and so employment increased.

This increase in employment improved not only the German economy, but also erected Germany in social and political ways too.

Overall, thanks to the Dawes Plan - Germany's problems were starting to get solved and Germany itself was starting to improve.



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

This is a good answer showing solid technique. It contains two paragraphs on the economic effects of the Plan, but also explains the wider effect on international relations. This takes it to Level 3.



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

This question is about 'effects' and candidates should avoid just writing about the Dawes Plan itself. Marks will be scored by giving details, but to score highly, candidates must consider what difference gangsterism made.

Question 1(d)

Candidates were much more comfortable with this question on the reasons for Germany's post war economic difficulties. There was good knowledge on the impact of reparations, on the French occupation of the Ruhr and on hyperinflation.

Some candidates provided significant detail, but remained in Level 2, as they did not link the material they were providing with economic difficulties. It is not sufficient to say that reparations caused economic difficulties and then give details of those reparations. Candidates need to explain why paying reparations caused the problems.

There were some chronological issues on this question (such as the impact of the Wall St. Crash) and some irrelevant material on uprisings against the government, but generally, candidates answered well.

one reason why the German economy faced problems was because of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. As this is because they lost valuable resources such as their colonies, the coal fields and ~~the~~ fertile land to Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. This meant that they had ~~little~~ little money to pay off the reparations given to them in the treaty.



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

The opening paragraph of the answer shows how Level 3 can be reached by linking the material to the issues of economic difficulties. The candidate has argued that the Treaty of Versailles created problems and has then gone on to explain why it did so.



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

Sometimes causation questions will be set on a topic candidates know well. That should please them, but only if they write on the reasons for the event/issue occurring, not 'tell the story' of all they know.

Question 2(a)

This was not a popular question and some candidates struggled with the time frame given. The question did not include attempting to take control through the Munich Putsch, nor was it true that by 1928 the Nazis had won significant support in the Reichstag because of economic problems.

What examiners were looking for was an understanding of how Hitler changed tactics from using force to trying to win power through the electoral system, party reorganisation, Mein Kampf and the beginnings of the propaganda campaign that was to prove so successful after 1929.

Some candidates had a very good knowledge of these points and were able to score highly. Most answers to this question, however, failed to score above mid Level 2.

Question 2(b)

Candidates knew this topic well and there was a significant amount of detailed narrative around the Reichstag Fire, the Night of the Long Knives and the Enabling Act. Some candidates also talked about measures against the church and trade unions. As long as this material was linked to dealing with opposition, rather than just relating how Hitler consolidated his power, high marks were awarded, especially where candidates were able to identify a deliberate policy on the part of Hitler. 'Exploiting fears of communism', 'Dealing with internal as well as external opposition' were commonly identified as methods and the use of such 'pegs' enabled candidates to reach Level 3 more easily.

Some answers went well beyond the timespan given in the question and talked of measures against the Jews during the mid 1930s. Such material was not rewarded.

Once Hitler became chancellor in the year 1933, he dealt with opposition in various ways in the years 1933 and 1934.

The first step Hitler took to ~~remove~~ removing opposition was by passing the Enabling Act in 1933. The Enabling Act was a document that allowed Hitler to make new laws for four years without needing consent from the Reichstag. Initially, this meant that whatever Hitler said would become law. He used this as his main method of dealing with opposition because it allowed him to do whatever he wanted without having anyone to stop him.

Secondly, Hitler banned Trade Unions as a way to deal with opposition. He believed that they were a way of workers would have too much freedom and say. As a result of this, strikes were also banned too. This left workers with no rights, no say and no freedom. It meant that they could not speak out against Hitler.

Thirdly, another way he removed opposition was by banning all political parties except the NSDAP. Communists were his main rivals and source of opposition and to remove them meant that they too had no say in running the country.

All of these new laws were able to be passed due to the Enabling act so, it can be seen that they are all knock-on effects of one another.



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

This answer lacks a little detail, but is still able to reach Level 3 by focusing on the method that Hitler used. In this case, the candidate argues that his control of opposition came primarily from the passing of the Enabling Act and Hitler's exploitation of the powers it gave him.



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

Candidates should watch out for dates in questions. Examiners use them intentionally to limit the time period on which candidates should write. On this question, candidates were not required to write on events after 1934.

Question 3(a)

This question was answered by only a minority of candidates. However, those who did answer usually had a good knowledge of economic issues in the 1930s. The impact of rearmament was well-known, though there was some confusion between the National Labour Service and the German Labour Front. There was some good linkage/prioritisation on this question, usually by showing how rearmament combined with the German Labour Front, or by explaining how one factor could not have worked without the contribution of another. Such answers were rewarded at high Level 3 or Level 4.

Overall, I believe that rearmament was the most had the impact on German economic problems because it created a lot of jobs like the National Labour service but it fueled industries that could be used for things other than arms such as cars, buildings etc. Where as the National Labour service it only stimulated businesses that supplied materials for motorways. Also rearmament is more important than the army because it supplies the army. In my opinion, rearmament was the foundation for tackling economic problems in Germany, 1933-1939.



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The extract is the final paragraph of an answer that scored at the bottom of Level Four. In the main body of the essay the candidate has explained the impact of the various factors and in this final paragraph attempts to prioritise between rearmament and a number of other factors



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

As in earlier questions, in this question candidates must ensure that they don't leave the examiner wanting to write 'and this means?' after each paragraph. If a factor is said to be important, candidates must explain why that is so.

Question 3(b)

This was a popular question and candidates had a good knowledge of Nazi policies on education, Jews and women (though less so on the Arts). Many answers were supported with excellent detail, though it was disappointing to see so much material on the Holocaust, which is not part of our specification. This was particularly unfortunate where candidates argued that the impact was greatest on the Jews because so many of them died in the Final Solution.

As is customary, there was no 'right answer' as to where the greatest impact was seen and there were convincing arguments on the long-term effects on children, the devastating impact on the Jews of their loss of civil rights and the 'return' of women to their position as keepers of the home. Some excellent answers also explained how the control of the Arts had a major impact because it was part of the wider propaganda policy designed to change the thinking of the German people. Such explanations took answers into Level 3, though weaker answers tended to give the narrative of the policies and remained in Level 2.

Many candidates to move from an explanation of the impact of the individual policies to a consideration of whether one (or more) of those policies had a greater impact than others. Where this was done, the argument tended to be that one policy was the most important because it was very important, rather than by direct comparison with the impact of other policies.

Summary

- Candidates need to check that they are familiar with all the material that is listed in the amplification of content.
- In Q1a candidates must take care not to paraphrase the source instead of making an inference from what it says.
- Candidates must make sure that they take note of dates in questions to understand the exact requirements of what they are being asked.
- In causation questions candidates must ensure that they explain how the factors they are addressing brought about the stated outcome and not just 'tell the story'.
- Centres must take care that candidates do not use 'key phrases' in a superficial manner that prevents them from fully explaining their answer. When they talk about links or relative importance, they must prove it.
- Candidates must remember the importance of correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in their answers.

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