

History B (Modern World)

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J417**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **J117**

OCR Report to Centres

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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A971/11-17 Aspects of International Relations, 1919-2005 with the Study in Depth

Section A: The Inter-War Years, 1919-1939

Question 1(a)

This was answered well by a significant number of students who were able to successfully identify the cartoonist's message – that the cynical relationship between Hitler and Stalin was one of convenience and likely to be short-lived. Good answers linked the message to inferences based on the artist's comment 'Wonder how long the honeymoon will last?' (Level 5) and then went further to explain the ideological differences between the two leaders (contextual knowledge). Some candidates made the point that the Nazi-Soviet Pact was only a temporary agreement to divide Poland and that neither expected the other to keep his promises. The Level 6 mark is reserved for answers of this nature which use the details of the source and contextual knowledge to support the main message. Weaker answers reached a ceiling of Level 3 (4 marks) when they only identified a secondary message, perhaps referring to the point that Germany and Russia had 'come to an agreement' which was supported by the view in the cartoon that they are shown as married.

Question 1(b)

Many candidates were able to identify a range of reasons to suggest why Britain followed a policy of appeasement in the 1930s; for instance, because of sympathy for the harsh Treaty of Versailles, or to undertake rearmament or because of the threat of Communism. Responses of this type would reach Level 2. Answers which then went on to develop and fully explain each identified reason by making explicit links to the demands of the question would then achieve Level 3 (one developed explanation) and Level 4 (two or more developed explanations). A typical example explained that, following the Depression, Britain regarded itself as unprepared militarily if there was a necessity to stop Hitler; appeasement therefore avoided confrontation with Germany (which was quickly rearming) and, in the short term, gave Britain a chance to build up its armed forces.

Question 2(a)

Teachers are right to encourage their students to look carefully at precisely what questions demand. The best answers to this question made specific references to the terms of the Treaty which weakened the German economy, such as reparations, the loss of the Saar or unemployment caused by the reduction of the army to 100,000. Vague references to the loss of industrial land and of population did not gain credit.

Question 2(b)

Candidates understood that Clemenceau considered the Treaty was not harsh enough and that he did not get the land that he wanted (Level 1 generalised comments). The best Level 3 and 4 answers related to specific issues because they sought to explain why, for instance, the failure to break Germany up into smaller states, or to annex the Saar permanently, or to establish the Rhine as the frontier with Germany, meant that Clemenceau was dissatisfied with the outcome of the Treaty. This dissatisfaction was often based on the French need for security, war debt or resentment about repeated German invasions of his country. Answers of this quality attempted to answer the question directly, whereas merely restating Clemenceau's aims fell short of explaining why he was unhappy with the Treaty.

Question 2(c)

There were some good answers to this question, although there was a tendency for responses to be unbalanced. Candidates were able to explain the foundations of German complaints about the Treaty, largely based on vulnerability to attack, the damage caused by reparations, the unfairness of war guilt and the fact that it had been a dictated peace. Development of these points took answers into Level 3. However, detailed knowledge of the counter argument based on the lack of validity of German complaints was less secure. Hence many answers did not reach Level 4 (balanced answers). Opportunities were missed, for example, to explain why Germany's treaty with Russia undermined their complaints about the terms of Versailles or why the German economy was not quite as badly weakened as was implied at the time.

Question 3(a)

Candidates were successful, on the whole, in gaining credit for methods which helped the League to encourage international co-operation. Typically, candidates referred to opportunities to discuss problems in the Assembly, collective security, the threat of sanctions and the encouragement of disarmament and trade. Each relevant point in (a) style questions gains a mark; supporting detail is also credited.

Question 3(b)

Level 2 answers (2-3 marks) included statements which identified that Germany was not allowed to join the League, the USSR was not invited to join and that the US Senate voted against membership. Candidates who could develop each statement into explanations, possibly by considering 'why was this so?' gained the higher marks reserved for Levels 3 and 4. For instance, some argued that the Allies' ideological objections to Communism underpinned by Russia's departure from the First World War in 1917 and foreign interventions against the Bolshevik regime, meant that the USSR would not become part of the League. Another developed explanation relating to Germany or the USA would attract maximum marks. The award of Level 4 marks did require consideration of two separate countries.

Question 3(c)

Answers which were confined to entirely general factors, such as the League not having an army of its own or the USA not being a member, without reference to specific crises, were marked at Level 2. Teachers will, quite rightly, encourage their students to argue both for and against the proposition in part (c) questions. There was evidence of candidates attempting to argue that the Manchurian crisis contributed to the failure of the League on the one hand, and on the other, assess the contribution of either the Abyssinian crisis and/or the impact of the Depression on the League. A conclusion at Level 5 would go further than repeat points already made and would make a supported judgement about how far the main factors contributed to the downfall of the League. For instance, the Manchurian crisis might have been regarded as less important because it showed the League's weakness in dealing with a major power; answers would explain why Britain and France failed to do more. Candidates may then take the view that the Abyssinian crisis had more impact because the Hoare-Laval Pact exposed Britain's fear of upsetting Mussolini who might be lost as a potential ally against Hitler. It showed that the League's resolve in challenging aggression had been fatally undermined. It is worth noting that the question contains no specific date; hence arguments which drew on events in the 1920s were acceptable.

Section B: The Cold War, 1945-1975

Question 1(a)

Candidates struggled to identify the main message the cartoonist wished to convey; essentially it is an anti-American view that Kennedy is being hypocritical and that he has no real reason to complain. Equally valid would be the interpretation that Khrushchev had more justified reasons to complain about the imbalance in missiles at that time. When this identification of message was supported by details in the cartoon, Level 5 (6 marks) was awarded; for instance, by referring to the US rockets shown in the cartoon. If the answer goes further and also supports the message with contextual knowledge, in this case the Cuban Missile Crisis, the maximum mark can be given (Level 6, 7 marks).

More typically though, candidates reached a ceiling of Level 3 (4 marks) for supporting a secondary message. These answers expressed the view that Kennedy was angry and felt threatened and this is because he is shown pointing and shouting at Khrushchev who has placed rockets close to the US. It was equally valid to apply this argument to Khrushchev.

Question 1(b)

Many candidates were able to identify a range of reasons to suggest why Kennedy was successful in dealing with the Cuban Missile Crisis; for instance, because he introduced a blockade, he refused to back down, and that Soviet ships close to the quarantine zone turned round. Responses of this type would reach Level 2. Answers which then went on to develop and fully explain each identified reason by making explicit links to the demands of the question would then achieve Level 3 (one developed explanation) and Level 4 (two or more developed explanations). A typical example explained that a deal was struck matching the removal of Soviet missiles in Cuba with the removal of US missiles in Turkey; but because the latter was completed in secret, Kennedy appeared to have made the heroic stand against Soviet aggression. Candidates found it more difficult to add a second, developed explanation (Level 4); they could have referred to the processes by which Kennedy reached decisions given the options which presented themselves during the crisis.

Question 2(a)

Teachers are right to encourage their students to look carefully at what precisely questions demand. The best answers to this question made specific references to what the USSR gained, such as a Soviet zone in Germany and sector in Berlin, the Soviet 'sphere of influence' in Eastern Europe and reparations. In this particular instance there was no need to differentiate between decisions made at Yalta and Potsdam, although candidates' knowledge of this part of the specification appears less secure.

Question 2(b)

Answers tended to focus on changes to who represented the Allies at Potsdam, identifying Truman's more anti-Communist attitude and perhaps mentioning the secrecy surrounding the US atomic bomb (Level 2). Better answers developed these identified factors, linking them to the question by explaining why they made agreement difficult to reach. For example, Truman's attitude could be placed in a context of Soviet expansion into Eastern Europe and Stalin's broken promises, for example, over Poland and the threat this was seen to pose. Two reasons fully developed would attract maximum marks.

Question 2(c)

Teachers will, quite rightly, encourage their students to argue both for and against the proposition in part (c) questions. There was evidence of candidates attempting to argue both for and against the success of the US in containing Communism. It is always helpful to remind students to check the date parameters which in this case was up to, and including, 1949. The best answers drew on the success of the Truman Doctrine, relating the Marshall Plan to specific events such as support for Britain and France and, of course, the western sectors and zones of Germany and Berlin. The Blockade was typically quoted as evidence of US success. At this point answers remained at Level 3. Counter arguments would raise marks into Level 4, citing Soviet success in securing significant areas of influence in, say, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Good candidates were able to relate these events to some kind of definition of what 'success' might really mean to the US. Level 5 answers went beyond merely repeating points already made, but attempted to explain how far US policy had been a success. Some argued, building on Level 4, that the US failed in Eastern Europe but at least could claim some success in preventing Soviet influence spreading to Western Europe.

Question 3(a)

It was rare to read poor answers to this question. Candidates usually mentioned such tactics as 'Operation Rolling Thunder', and the use of Agent Orange, napalm and 'search and destroy' methods. Vague references to bombing and the use of helicopters would not gain credit.

Question 3(b)

Here the emphasis was on the effectiveness of Vietcong methods, strategy and tactics. Candidates were correct to explain their impact on the US forces but should take care not to be drawn into irrelevant details about how the Americans fought their war. Weaker answers at Level 2 referred to such reasons as the use of guerrilla tactics, Vietcong knowledge of the terrain, their use of tunnels and how they blended into the local population. Good candidates went further by explaining what it was about these features which made them 'effective', thereby gaining Level 3 and 4 marks.

Question 3(c)

This question proved challenging for many candidates who resorted to descriptions (awarded at level 2) of media coverage of the Vietnam War, and vague statements about students protesting about, for example, the cost of the war or the 'draft'. Level 3 (4 marks) gave credit for explaining why these features put pressure on the government and created a political climate in which withdrawal became the only acceptable policy. This reasoning was often underpinned in good answers by specific references to My Lai and/or protests at Kent State University, because these events gave candidates opportunities to explain public outrage which put pressure on the government. Answers which explained the links between the impact of media coverage and protest gained credit for doing so. Weaker answers which argued that there were other factors equally as important as the two stated, gained no credit as they had gone outside the parameters of what the question was demanding.

Section C: A New World?, 1948-2005

Question 1(a)

The majority of candidates were able to identify a secondary message and support this with details from the cartoon and contextual knowledge. Most focused upon the idea that there was a new bad man who would eventually be viewed differently. A small number of candidates were able to identify the main message, stating that terrorists are cynical and can change to ensure they gain what they want. Clear reference was made to the cartoon to support the main message; contextual knowledge focused mainly upon Gerry Adams and the Good Friday Agreement, and Bin Laden and 9/11.

Question 1(b)

Candidates used their contextual knowledge effectively to explain why some people have resorted to terrorism. Explanations were related clearly to a specific group, and in some cases candidate's classified reasons into political, social and economic reasons.

Question 2(a)

There were some concise and focused responses to this question, with candidates displaying detailed knowledge of the Prague Spring. However, some candidates seemed unaware of when and where the Prague Spring occurred, and wrote instead about events in Hungary in 1956.

Question 2(b)

Most candidates were able to identify reasons why the Polish government was unable to stop the Solidarity movement, stating that Solidarity had the support of the Catholic Church, and that the government was concerned about the reaction of the West. A few candidates were able to develop these identifications into explanations. Some candidates confused the chronology of events in Poland at this time.

Question 2(c)

Candidates were able to explain how Glasnost and Perestroika led to the collapse of the Soviet Empire, and also explained the contribution of Solidarity. A number of candidates wrote in generalised terms only about Gorbachev being responsible for the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Question 3(a)

The majority of candidates were able to give one valid point, stating that people did not believe George Bush's claims about Weapons of Mass Destruction. Some candidates gained full marks for this question by also stating that there was concern about whether the invasion was legal, whether it would lead to the deaths of military personnel and of Iraqi citizens, and also that there was opposition from France.

Question 3(b)

Most candidates were able to explain one reason for the invasion of Iraq in 2003; this most often focused upon the role of Tony Blair. Some candidates gave several identifications, but were unable to develop these into explanations.

Question 3(c)

Candidates were able to explain why the invasion was a disaster for the Iraqi people. These explanations focused mainly upon the breakdown in law and order, and human rights abuses. Only a very small number of candidates were able to explain the benefits to the Iraqi people, focusing primarily upon the changes for Iraqi women. Benefits such as the end of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship were identified but rarely explained.

Part 2: DEPTH STUDY – GERMANY, 1918-1945

Question 4(a)

Many candidates produced good answers which recognised that the purpose of the poster was to get Germans to emulate the idealised Aryan family depicted in the image, using appropriate contextual knowledge, about Hitler's policy to reverse the birth rate decline, promote his theories about racially pure Germans and produce large families to provide the next generation of soldiers, to develop their responses. Less successful candidates tended to explain the message rather than explain its intended impact on German people.

Question 4(b)

There were many good answers to this question, with good contextual knowledge used to explain the features of the poster, which captured the attraction of the Hitler Youth. The best answers were able to explain other aspects of the Hitler Youth which made it attractive to young Germans. Less successful responses offered reasons why it was not popular, losing focus on the question.

Question 4(c)

Many candidates were able to use their knowledge of Hitler's policies to gain the support of workers such as Kdf to explain why they were not surprised by the scheme to produce a people's car. Appropriate contextual knowledge to explain surprised tended to include the priority Hitler gave to economic preparations for war. Other good answers expressed surprise given the heavy censorship of the period and/or that in the context of war a leading Nazi supporter would be critical of Hitler. A number of candidates found this question difficult and tended to express generalised comments using the source content only.

Question 5(a)

There were some good answers to this question, with many candidates displaying a good knowledge about the main events of the Kapp Putsch. Less successful responses displayed some confusion with other challenges to the Weimar Republic.

Question 5(b)

Most candidates were able to explain the problems arising from the French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr. The better responses attempted to distinguish between different aspects of the crisis discretely, typically focusing on the impact on industrial production and the brutal treatment meted out by the occupying force and then went on to explain problems arising from the policy of passive resistance and the printing of money resulting in hyper-inflation. The best responses also included the political challenge of the Munich Putsch and why that created difficulties for the Republic.

Question 5(c)

There were some very good answers to this question with the majority of candidates well-versed in the achievements of the Weimar Republic in the Stresemann Era. The best answers could balance these achievements against continuing weaknesses, such as the neglect of the farmers in the late 1920s and the resentment many Germans felt about the decadent culture in cities such as Berlin. Most candidates were able to comment on the fragility of an economic recovery based on short term US loans and the failure of the Weimar republic to respond effectively to the Depression following the Wall Street Crash.

Question 6(a)

Most candidates who attempted this question received high marks with good knowledge displayed about the main features of the Munich Putsch.

Question 6(b)

This question was generally well answered, with candidates displaying a good understanding of the opportunities afforded to Hitler to use the trial following his arrest to popularise the Nazi Party and give it a national profile. The change from a revolutionary to a legal strategy arising from Hitler's reflection on the failed Putsch during his time in Landsberg prison was also well understood by most candidates.

Question 6(c)

There were some good responses good to this question, although candidates tended to be more comfortable explaining other factors for Hitler becoming Chancellor than explaining the threat of communism. Less successful responses were unable to explain why Communism was feared by many Germans and a significant number of candidates used invalid commentary on the Reichstag Fire to explain the threat of Communism.

PART 2: DEPTH STUDY – RUSSIA, 1905-1941

Question 4 (a)

Most candidates recognised the significance of the photograph and were able to use appropriate contextual knowledge to comment on its message. The best responses were able to place it in the context of the power struggle following Lenin's death to explain its purpose in gaining Stalin legitimacy as the rightful heir of Lenin.

Question 4(b)

There were many good answers to the question with most candidates understanding the significance of the deceit played out against Trotsky with regards to the date of the funeral in the undermining of his profile as a loyal Leninist and close comrade. The best responses were able to explain other reasons for Trotsky's failure to succeed Lenin as leader such as his unpopular policy of world revolution or the fact that he was arrogant, not a team player and a late arrival in the Bolshevik party. Less successful responses focused on Stalin's strengths without relating them to why Trotsky failed to become leader.

Question 4(c)

There were many excellent answers to this question with varying aspects of Stalin's brutal despotism used to place the message in context ranging from the Purges to the man-made famine in the Ukraine.

Question 5(a)

Most candidates who attempted this question were well-versed in the events of Bloody Sunday and scored highly.

Question 5(b)

There were many good answers to this question, with candidates able to explain the significance of the Duma in appeasing the middle classes and Stolypin's repression in securing the regime. Some very good responses commented on the abolition of redemption dues in the November Manifesto and the impact this had on appeasing the peasantry together with the Land Reforms. Less successful responses simply described policies without explaining their significance.

Question 5(c)

Most candidates were able to display some knowledge of the weaknesses of Tsar Nicholas II and how his wartime leadership and his delegation of responsibility to Rasputin and the tsarina contributed to his growing unpopularity in Russia, creating the context for revolution. The best answers were able to explain other factors such as the growing problems of food shortages and the impact of the war on the attitude of the elites and on general morale on the home front to provide a balanced response. Less successful answers described factors without explaining why they contributed to revolution.

Question 6(a)

Most candidates were able to describe some of the main features of the Five-Year Plans. Less successful responses described the aims, rather than the features, of the Plans, or included descriptions of collectivisation.

Question 6(b)

This question was generally well answered with candidates displaying a good understanding of the importance of collectivisation either ideologically or because of its contribution to the success of industrialisation through the release of labour, the supply of grain to the new industrial cities or the exporting of grain for hard currency. Less successful responses tended to describe the policy.

Question 6(c)

There were many good answers to this question with candidates displaying a good understanding of the positive achievements and the costs of both the Five-Year Plans and collectivisation. Most candidates were able to provide a balanced response to the question.

PART 2: DEPTH STUDY – THE USA, 1919-1941

Question 4(a)

Most candidates were able to give a secondary message from the cartoon, stating that Roosevelt is talking to the American public or Roosevelt is talking to the American citizens. This secondary message was supported with contextual knowledge of fireside chats and source details. Many candidates also gave the main message, with the focus on Roosevelt keeping all Americans in touch with his plans. These answers were usually supported with both contextual knowledge and source details. A few candidates were clearly aware of the context of the cartoon, but did not actually address its message. A number of candidates described the cartoon in great detail, but again did not actually give the message.

Question 4(b)

Many candidates were able to state the message of the cartoon as showing that Roosevelt is on his way to gaining total power. The message was clearly supported with details from the cartoon about Roosevelt heading for the dictator's chair. Some candidates were able to give the purpose of the cartoon and clearly explained this in the context of Roosevelt's plans to change the Supreme Court. Some candidates displayed detailed knowledge of the context of this cartoon, but gave no message or purpose. As in responses to 4(a), a number of candidates described the cartoon in great detail, without actually answering the question.

Question 4(c)

Candidates expressed surprise by explaining that Roosevelt had done much for America in providing jobs through the New Deal, and therefore it was surprising that anyone would want to harm him. Lack of surprise was explained in the context of higher taxation, and the feeling of rich people that there was nothing in the New Deal for them. A minority of candidates expressed surprise or lack of surprise, but did not explain why, simply copying out parts of the source. Relatively few candidates made any comment at all on the provenance of the cartoon.

Question 5(a)

Many candidates gained full marks here. They detailed points relating to the growth of Hollywood, the introduction of talkies, the new radio broadcasts, the introduction of new dances, the development of sporting events and the growing number of star personalities, both in film and sport. However, candidates need to look carefully at the wording of the question, as some described popular entertainment rather than the changes that occurred in the 1920s.

Question 5(b)

Candidates explained that many Americans simply did not agree with prohibition and were therefore willing to break the law to obtain alcohol. Explanations of bribery and corruption and the difficulties in enforcing the prohibition law were also given. Some candidates described speakeasies, smuggling and gang warfare without actually explaining why these caused prohibition to fail.

Question 5(c)

There were many well-developed explanations of intolerance. These included attitudes towards immigrants, with the Sacco and Vanzetti case used as an example. Discrimination against African Americans was clearly explained, with reference to the workplace and to segregation in everyday life, and also to the actions of the Ku Klux Klan. A number of candidates also explained the intolerance displayed in the Scopes case. Some candidates went on to explain that there was increasing tolerance in 1920s America, referring to the changing role of women in detail. The majority of answers to this question explained only intolerance. A number of candidates seemed unaware of the meaning of the word intolerance; their answers focused upon the boom and bust in the economy.

Question 6(a)

Some candidates displayed a detailed knowledge of the 1920s stock market boom, focusing upon the rising price of shares, the number of investors, speculation, buying on the margin and the bull market. However, a substantial number of candidates did not know the details of the stock market boom; they wrote instead about mass production and cars, and the problems in the farming sector.

Question 6(b)

Candidates used their contextual knowledge effectively to explain reasons for weakness in the US economy. There were well-developed explanations of over-production in both industry and agriculture, and the effects of tariffs on trade. A small number of candidates wrote solely about the events and effects of the Wall Street Crash; the question actually focused on the situation before the Wall Street Crash.

Question 6(c)

Answers focused on the appeal of Roosevelt to the American public; his promises to introduce change by providing more jobs, reviving industry and agriculture and providing relief for the poor and unemployed were all detailed. Roosevelt's success as governor of New York State was also explained. Candidates explained that Roosevelt was elected as president because people were desperate for someone other than Hoover; this side of the argument was developed with reference to Hoover's inadequate response to the Depression and to his treatment of the Bonus Marchers. A significant number of candidates wrote answers based around Roosevelt and the New Deal. The question actually referred to the reasons why Roosevelt won the election. Candidates need to read the actual question carefully.

PART 2: DEPTH STUDY – CAUSES AND EVENTS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR, 1890-1918

Question 4(a)

Most candidates gained credit in Level 4 as they were aware from the postcard that the Belgians had been brave in putting up a stand against the invading Germans and were able to relate the contents of the postcard to The Schlieffen Plan. A few candidates gained credit in Level 5 because they knew the message and context of the postcard but did not state the purpose which was to raise the morale of the British people.

Question 4(b)

A good answer to this question clearly gave the message that the outcome of supporting your 'friends' set off a chain of events. Supported by contextual events for example, The Alliance System or the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand would gain full credit.

Question 4(c)

Candidates were able to use their contextual knowledge of the relationship between Austria - Hungary and Russia 1908 – 1914 to be able to explain why there were both surprised and not surprised.

Question 5(a)

This question was well answered and candidates gained credit for identifying the countries involved and the fact that it was a "friendly agreement".

Question 5(b)

Most candidates successfully identified reasons for the naval race between Britain and Germany but only a few candidates were able to give two detailed explanations. Good explanations included that the British were becoming concerned about the Kaiser's desire to have a big empire and subsequently a much larger navy, so both Germany and Britain started to build Dreadnoughts.

Question 5(c)

Candidates were well prepared to answer questions on the actions of the Kaiser in Morocco and many successfully linked the Kaiser's actions to increasing tension between the Great Powers especially with Britain and France. They were less prepared on events in Bosnia in 1908-1909 and weaker candidates took it as an opportunity to write about the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand gaining no credit.

Question 6(a)

Many candidates wrote about life in the trenches rather than 'trench warfare' gaining no credit. Candidates were credited for recalling how trench warfare was conducted - for example artillery bombardments, infantry going 'over the top' and the resulting stalemate.

Question 6(b)

Candidates were well prepared for this question and included detailed explanations in their answers as to why there was a high level of casualties on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. Most mentioned the ineffective artillery bombardment that had not destroyed the German defences which were deep underground and the fact that the Germans had the higher ground which resulted in them machine gunning the British troops as they walked across No Man's Land.

Question 6(c)

Most candidates answered this question to the effect that the results of America entering the war "were to give the Allied forces more troops and resources". Similarly, details of the Ludendorff Offensive were not known by the majority of candidates, so that such answers were credited in Level 2.

PART 2: DEPTH STUDY – THE USA 1945-1975 - LAND OF FREEDOM?

Question 4(a)

Most candidates gained credit in Level 4 as they were aware from the cover of the magazine that Communism was threatening America and were able to use details from the source to support the message. Candidates gained credit above Level 4 when they knew the message the source was conveying but did not put forward the purpose that the American people needed to take action to prevent a Communist takeover in America.

Question 4(b)

This question was very well answered by candidates. Candidates were well prepared on McCarthy and his role in politics. They gained credit for successfully getting the message that McCarthy's accusations were meaningless as he had no real evidence to support his them. Question 4(c) Candidates tended to gain credit more by explaining why the source was not useful, than useful. They were able to explain that the source did not tell you about McCarthy's investigations into possible communists in the army. Few candidates had the contextual knowledge to extend the source and say why it was useful.

Question 5(a)

Very few candidates knew anything about the Freedom Summer of 1964 and thus most gained no credit.

Question 5(b)

Most candidates could identify why the 1963 march on Washington was important and thus gained credit in Level 2. For Level 4, two detailed explanations were necessary which could include the impact of the March on public opinion, especially as it was televised and peaceful, and the power of Martin Luther King's oratory.

Question 5(c)

Some candidates gained credit in Level 4 because of their knowledge of President Kennedy's contribution to improving civil rights. Some knew that he introduced a Civil Rights Bill to Congress but did not understand what the Bill aimed to do, thus remaining in Level 2. There were some good explanations of the role of Malcolm X in encouraging black Americans to fight for their rights.

Question 6(a)

Most candidates wrote about why women wanted the choice to have an abortion rather than 'how' the abortion laws were challenged in the 1960s and 70s.

Question 6(b)

Many candidates gained credit for identifying reasons such as they wanted equal pay to men, but there were only a few explanations.

Question 6(c)

In order to gain credit candidates needed to give specific examples which highlighted improvement in rights – for example, details of 1964 Civil Rights Act. There were some detailed attempts to explain why women's' campaign to improve rights by the mid-1970s had not been successful.

A972/21 British Depth Study, 1890-1918

General Comments

Candidates seemed to respond well to the subject matter of this session's paper, and to the range of sources they were asked to examine. The range and spread of responses was greater than has been seen in recent papers, suggesting that candidates had the confidence to think for themselves and respond to the sources in the context of the paper rather than trying to adapt pre-prepared responses. Very few candidates omitted questions, and the vast majority completed all questions. This would seem to indicate that the demands of the questions and the length of time in which to answer were well matched. Whilst there were candidates that had been 'coached' to include a variety of tests and inappropriate comments, the majority of candidates were able to apply their own common sense to questions and their writing indicated that they not only enjoyed the battle but were interested in the subject matter. In some instances this led to candidates trying to insert their background knowledge of an issue whether it was relevant or not. This remains an area of weakness for many candidates – they have a tendency to match up their knowledge against a source to confirm that the event happened rather than using their knowledge to address how the source portrays particular events or people.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

A very large proportion of candidates were able to identify or explain at least the message of the source and very many were able to see the purpose of the source, to mobilise the entire population and get them involved either in the armed forces or in war work. The only real weaknesses shown in answers to this question emerged when candidates attempted to explain exactly what the various figures in the cartoon were doing or attempted to explain why the source could not be trusted because it was a propaganda piece. Such analyses were often valid but not required by the question.

Question 2

This question stretched the entire range of candidates. Many relied on selecting details from each source and simply asserting that these were right. Such answers were at least an attempt to answer the question and as such scored higher than answers which effectively summarised each source without addressing the question. It was gratifying to see many students using the two sources together as the question intended, either at the content level or beyond. Many candidates saw the inherent contradictions within Source B and commented effectively on this. It was pleasing to see many candidates evaluating the sources using their own knowledge although there were missed opportunities for cross referencing to Source A. However, many candidates missed the opportunity to develop their answer beyond testing details in the source to whether the source was representative of attitudes at the time.

Question 3

Once again this question stretched the range of candidates. There were many answers which were everyday empathy (eg surprised the police did not stop the riot). There were also some serious misinterpretations of the source, probably the result of nerves - candidates must try to read slowly and carefully before launching into hasty answers. Many candidates understood that the source was affected by restrictions at the time, such as DORA, although few reached the top level. Most commented on events in the report rather than the style of the reporting of the events.

Question 4

This question was generally tackled more effectively than is often the case when candidates are asked to compare two sources. Some candidates simply summarised the two sources. However, a pleasing number of students used the contrasting content of the two sources to argue that E disproved F because of the positive attitudes shown in it. There were also a promising number of candidates who saw that at face value E appeared to disprove F, but that given its nature the weight of this proof was debatable. Such answers reached the top levels.

Question 5

There were some misinterpretations of this cartoon, with many candidates assuming the cartoon was a recruitment poster or something similar. However, a large proportion were able to explain the message that the striker was helping Germany and extra marks were awarded to candidates who understood that the cartoonist was not simply recording this point, he was actively criticising the striker.

Question 6

Most candidates seemed very well prepared for this question and achieved Level 3 fairly easily. However, there were relatively few successful evaluations and thus a mark above 10 (or 13 when added to SPAG) was quite rare. Many candidates attempted to evaluate the sources, but in most cases this was restricted to undeveloped comments relating to provenance. Some candidates showed that they did have relevant contextual knowledge, and could successfully deploy it in order to evaluate the sources.

A972/22 British Depth Study, 1939-1975

General Comments

Candidates seemed to respond well to the subject matter of this session's paper, and to the range of sources they were asked to examine. The range and spread of responses was greater than has been seen in recent papers, suggesting that candidates had the confidence to think for themselves and respond to the sources in the context of the paper rather than trying to adapt pre-prepared responses. Very few candidates omitted questions, and the vast majority completed all questions. This would seem to indicate that the demands of the questions and the length of time in which to answer were well matched. Whilst there were candidates that had been 'coached' to include a variety of tests and inappropriate comments, the majority of candidates were able to apply their own common sense to questions and their writing indicated that they not only enjoyed the battle but were interested in the subject matter. In some instances this led to candidates trying to insert their background knowledge of an issue whether it was relevant or not. This remains an area of weakness for many candidates – they have a tendency to match up their knowledge against a source to confirm that the event happened rather than using their knowledge to address how the source portrays particular events or people.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

Many candidates achieved L4 by explaining that the cartoon was published to represent the Teddy Boys in a bad light, or to raise awareness of their violent acts. Far fewer managed to get into L5 or 6 because they focused on the message rather than the purpose of the cartoon. In addition, many took the opportunity to explain how negative portrayals of young people were common in the media of the time but then failed to explain how this cartoon related to that general context. In fact a disappointing number of candidates failed to get beyond Level 2 because their whole answer was based on explaining that the cartoon was published because of events which were happening at the time, or, in the case of weaker candidates, because of general change that was happening in teenagers' lives. This led to swathes of contextual knowledge which was not being used to get to the heart of the question. Even some stronger candidates wasted much time by writing a page giving the general context of the 1950s before beginning to address the question.

Question 2

On the whole this question was answered very well, with most students addressing the issue of surprise, and most reaching at least Level 4 by comparing the behaviour of the Teddy Boys in the source to the fact that they were generally known for violence. Many candidates successfully contrasted the content of the source against specific contextual knowledge (usually the violence in Notting Hill in 1958) or the impression given in Source A. This was probably the most successful use of a cross reference yet seen on this paper, perhaps reflecting that candidates had just tackled source A. This suggests again the importance of getting candidates to read all of the sources before they start answering questions.

Question 3

Most candidates achieved either Level 3 by comparing the source content or Level 4 by comparing the intended audience, correctly identifying that both were aimed at teenagers. Some candidates, although fewer than in previous sessions, wrote completely separate summaries of the sources, and only compared right at the end in a sentence or two. However, there were still not many achieving only L1 or 2 on this question. Very few candidates indeed were awarded L5

for explaining that the 2 sources gave different impressions of teenagers; they more often than not only compared Dean himself to the Beatles, rather than seeing them as representatives of teenagers. More though did manage to reach Level 6 by explaining that the sources were similar because they both revealed changes in teenage culture; this was usually linked to an earlier point about the growth in a teenage market due to increased spending power. There were relatively few responses at the top level, reflecting the fact that most candidates still see sources as sources of information about the subject matter rather than useful as information about the authors of the sources.

Question 4

This question seemed to separate out the candidates into either Level 2 or L5/L6, with relatively few interpreting parts of the cartoon or identifying a secondary message. Unfortunately, there were substantial numbers of answers which misinterpreted the cartoon. The most common misinterpretations were: the cartoonist is portraying youths as troublemakers; the cartoonist is showing the division in society between mods and rockers; and the cartoonist is showing that society is changing. There was much irrelevant contextual knowledge given for this question about the pill and the sexual revolution! However, a pleasing number of candidates did correctly interpret the cartoonist's message, although some were not quite clear enough about getting across that the cartoonist was critical of this hypocrisy, rather than just pointing it out, so this left them in L5 rather than L6.

Question 5

Candidates seemed to find this the most challenging question on the paper, although more managed to reach Level 5 for this question than in similar questions in previous sessions, by showing that F could disprove G because of the difference in content. However, a significant minority still fell into the trap of selecting contrasting details without addressing the issue of proof for Level 2 (or worse, summarising the two sources completely separately for Level 0), and when they did finally get round to addressing the issue of proof, this proof tended to be based on undeveloped comments on the provenance of the sources, limiting them to Level 3. Level 6 and 7 were rarely achieved. When they were, it was usually Level 7 through comparison of content plus evaluation of G, showing how it was unreliable because of the perspective of the author, with examples given from the source of bitter language. Lots of candidates tried to evaluate one or both sources, but unsuccessfully for the higher levels. Many tried to prove that Source F was right because of how popular the Beatles were, but of course, this did not prove G wrong!

Question 6

Most candidates seemed very well prepared for this question and achieved Level 3 relatively easily. However, there were relatively few successful evaluations and thus a mark above 10 (or 13 when added to SPAG) was quite rare. Many candidates attempted to evaluate the sources, but in most cases this was restricted to undeveloped comments relating to provenance. Some candidates showed that they did have relevant contextual knowledge, but could successfully deploy it in order to evaluate the sources.

A981 Aspects of international relations, 1919-2005

Key Message

This paper is a mixture of source evaluation questions and more traditional explanation approaches. It requires the candidate to be able to demonstrate a good level of competency in both areas if the higher levels are to be accessed.

General Comments

Candidates need to be confident in handling sources when dealing with Question 1. This particularly applies to putting the sources within a context prior to evaluating within the demands of the question.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A: The Inter-War Years, 1919-1939

Question 1(a)

The question required candidates to read, and understand in the context of the time, Source A and with the awareness of Source A's content consider how this might make them surprised, or not, with Source B. At the higher levels consideration of purpose, tone, provenance and context would have helped to explain surprised, or not surprised.

Question 1(b)

Purpose questions require candidates to be aware of what was happening at the time the source was published. Here was a cartoon published by the Soviets commenting on the situation Czechoslovakia found itself in following the Munich Conference of 1938. To reach purpose required candidates to consider why the Soviets might have published this cartoon then.

A number of candidates confused the representations of Czechoslovakia and Britain thinking it was the Englishman who was going to put his head in the noose. Others were able to describe what they could see in the cartoon or make general assertions such as 'The man is being hung.'

Question 1(c)

Some candidates stated that the cartoonist was showing that Hitler and Stalin were working together and that the length of the honeymoon was uncertain. Others considered Hitler, being the groom, had greater power over Stalin as he was shown as the bride. Much time was taken describing the detail of the cartoon which adds very little to a message type question. Few moved to the idea of the relationship being temporary. Links to the context of the Nazi-Soviet Pact were also sometimes made.

Question 1(d)

This question demanded explanation of the reasons why appeasement was followed by Britain in the years prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. Here candidates needed to develop their knowledge into explanation rather than being of a descriptive nature.

Comments on questions 2 and 3 can be found in the Full Report for A971.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
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