

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY A**

**H505**

For first teaching in 2015

**Y221/01 Summer 2023 series**

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## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

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## Paper Y221/01 series overview

Y221/01 is one of twenty four units in Paper 2 for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about 100 years through a short-answer essay and a traditional essay. The paper contains two questions, each having two parts, a short-answer essay and a traditional essay and candidates had to answer both parts of one question.

To do well on the short-answer essay question, candidates needed to consider the significance or importance of both issues, factors, individuals or events mentioned in relation to the question. Having analysed or explained both they must reach a supported judgement as to which is the most important or significant.

To do well on the traditional essay, candidates needed to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. To reach the higher levels, candidates needed to assess the issues they discussed and reach a supported judgement, at least in the conclusion.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short-answer essay</li> <li>• reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important</li> <li>• linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question</li> <li>• discussed at least two relevant issues in depth</li> <li>• gave supporting detail that was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic</li> <li>• reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question</li> <li>• made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way</li> <li>• produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response</li> <li>• were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question</li> <li>• showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay</li> <li>• were unable to support their response with relevant or accurate material</li> <li>• did not focus on the precise wording of the question</li> <li>• made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.</li> </ul>

## Question 1 (a)

1 (a) Which of the following had the greatest impact on German workers in the years from 1933 to 1939?

- (i) German Labour Front
- (ii) 'Strength through Joy'

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

This was the least popular of the two questions. Some candidates struggled to distinguish between the two organisations, leading to some confusion in details, and some generalisation. Better responses combined precise examples with a clear emphasis of the impact on workers. A significant number of responses tended to be descriptive and were restricted to the lower levels. There was also some unevenness noted, with 'Strength through Joy' generally more familiar to candidates.

## Question 1 (b)\*

(b)\* 'The 1953 uprising was the greatest challenge faced by the East German government in the period from 1949 to 1963.' How far do you agree? [20]

Most candidates could identify the key elements of the Berlin Uprising, and often combined this with consideration of other factors including the 'brain drain' or the unpopularity of collectivisation. However, fewer candidates successfully focused on the exact question, considering the challenge to the government. The most successful responses distinguished between short term challenges, and the possibility that crushing the uprising helped to secure the regime under Ulbricht.

## Exemplar 1

b East and West Germany were divided in 1949 and each side allied with opposing members of the Cold War. Whilst Adenauer proudly proclaimed in 1948 when Trizonia joined the European Council that "we belong to the West, not Soviet Russia", East Germany and Ulbricht began to function as a Soviet satellite state. The Workers' Uprising of 1953 presented Ulbricht with a ~~new~~ different situation to diffuse. However, it was not the greatest challenge that East Germany faced as there were chronic, long-term issues that hindered its development.

Ulbricht's policy of rapid industrialisation and collectivisation led to multiple grievances from the East German population. Private businesses and shops resented the higher taxes and administrative hassle. Agricultural farmers initially refused to voluntarily collectivise, resulting in the second wave of forced collectivisation in 1960 or by 1958 only  $\frac{1}{3}$  of land was collectivised. Large-scale farmers felt alienated by the process and did not like the use of collective machinery. Workers despised the low wages in the face of rising prices and rationing. Society in East Germany as a whole seemed to challenge Ulbricht's economic policies. This resulted in the Workers' Uprising of 1953, prompted by workers in East Berlin but subsequently joined by hundreds of cities. The strike constituted 5-7% of the workforce and they demanded higher wages, democracy, reunification and Ulbricht's resignation. Ultimately, the strike was thwarted as they lacked proper coordination and planning, lacked the arms needed to defend from Soviet intervention,

and the lack of Western aid. The 10% increase in standards and the working hours that seemed to be the final spark of the state were subsequently withdrawn when it was a success of the state. This acted as the main challenge towards the East German government as workers struck against fundamental Socialist principles, challenging the doctrine that the government was based on. However, it only cemented Ulbricht's position as leader of the state as the USSR recognised East Germany as a state and allowed it to enter the Warsaw Pact. Moreover, the uprising was simply emblematic of the wider discontent of the nation and thus cannot be considered the greatest challenge faced by the East German government.

Economic challenges faced by the government were plentiful. Whilst the division of Germany meant that East Germany had lost access to raw materials that were abundant in Western Germany. Moreover, they lost access to Western markets for their goods and services. Following the division of Germany, 75% of trade was with Eastern Europe, of which 40% was with the USSR alone.\*

The loss of provinces to Poland also meant that the government faced the issues arising from a dislocated population. Whilst the first transitional two-year plan was deemed successful as it led to 76% of industry being nationalised, the following failures of economic initiatives reflected the poignant issues faced economically by the government. The First Five-Year Plan resulted in industrial production doubling but this was at the expense of

private initiatives and production of consumer goods. There was also a stress on quantity instead of quality. The ~~so~~ initial successes, with coal production exceeding its target, simply masked the failure of the government to address the complex economic issues ~~first~~ they were confronted with. The Seven Year Plan aimed to increase industrial production by 185%, consumer goods production by 177% and further extend collectivisation. These goals were severely unrealistic and the initiative led to a peak in emigration to the West in 1962. Ultimately, the frequent attempts to address the economic shortcomings of the East German speak to an immense challenge the government failed to solve.

Social factors also played an important role in the challenges facing the East German government. Education needed to be reformed as it had played such a pivotal role in Nazi propaganda. The government replaced 80% of its teachers as well as all the textbooks and the curriculum itself due to the Law for the Democratisation of German Schools. In an attempt to solve the issues surrounding economic development and the brain drain, there was a focus on technical education. All children over the age of 14 had to fulfil at least one day of compulsory technical education. Schools were often paired up with a factory to achieve this. However, the migration of workers to the West continued, culminating in roughly 3.4 million people leaving the East. This posed a crucial challenge to the East German government in both the short-term and



the long-term as they faced a constant loss of capital and well-educated workers as well as a public fear of inferiority to the West. The variety of social challenges and measures ranging from female emancipation to rebuilding the  $\frac{1}{4}$  loss of all buildings to the implementation of a central social welfare system, emphasises the challenge the East German government faced socially. They seemed unable to compete with the West German government, illustrated by their lack of trade with them, the constant migration to the West, and social comparisons often made. Whilst West Germany was able to establish 50 new worldwide universities, East Germany only had 96 universities. East Germany was unable to provide ample opportunities to its population and offered a lower quality of life. The inability of the East German ~~country~~ <sup>society</sup> to compete with the West German society posed a significant threat and challenge to its government.

Overall, the greatest challenge that the East German government faced was comparison with West Germany. Whilst this is signified in the Uprising of 1953 as workers could see the better working conditions in the West, this is a symptom and not the main cause. Whilst working hours rose 10% in the East, they reduced to 45 hours a week 1950-55 and by 1960 they were only 40 hours a week in ~~East~~ West Germany. Whilst, 6 million houses were built quickly in West Germany and 80% of these were council estates, there was only a focus on reconstruction from 1956 in East Germany and the 100,000

flats built a year were of a lower standard and there was an inefficient allocation process. The economic prosperity in the West, with a constant 8% growth rate, a reduction in unemployment from 11 million to 1 million, and the doubling of GNP, was frequently used as propaganda against the East. This meant the East German population were powerfully aware of the inferiority of their government and therefore rebelled against it or migrated to the West. Ultimately, 1963 saw the bringing up of the Berlin Wall, the perfect symbol of the divisions between the East and the West as well as the manifestation of the inability of the East German ~~government~~ government to compete with its Western counterpart.

\* In contrast, ~~East~~ West Germany became the 3rd largest economy, second to the USSR and USA alone, and a significant trading partner globally. "The 'Made in Germany' label was internationally recognised as a symbol of good quality at low prices. The inability of the ~~East~~ East German economy to compete internationally due to its ineffective and expensive means of production posed the government with a significant threat. They were unable to develop and grow on the basis of exports and subsequently could not integrate as well with the West or offer its population an enhanced living standard.

Exemplar 1 was placed in Level 6 as it dealt with an impressive range of issues, including the problems of the economic policies adopted by Ulbricht, the problems caused by migration as well as the named factor with the 1953 uprising. The candidate focused on the specific question by evaluating the nature of the challenge to the East German government for each factor in detail. Another obvious feature of this response is the interim judgements made at the end of each argument as well as a concluding judgement. These are all features of a Level 6 response.

## Question 2 (a)

- 2 (a) Which of the following saw greater change in the DDR in the years from 1949 to 1963?
- (i) The economy
  - (ii) Society

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

On this question a significant number of candidates discussed the FRG, rather than the DDR/GDR. When discussing the DDR many candidates wrote quite generally about the economy at times, with better responses picking out key details such as collectivisation or nationalisation. In examining changes to society there were a number of relevant areas discussed including mass organisations, religious change, the role of women and education. The most successful responses formed a judgement that often considered the extent of the change, and not just whether things changed 'or not'. This can be seen in Exemplar 2.

## Exemplar 2

2	a	<p>Undoubtedly, east German society saw a greater change in the early years of the GDR. All were granted free healthcare and sick pay, and pensions from 65 for men and 60 for women. Furthermore, women were encouraged to have both a family and a job, thus leading to improvements to maternity care and the introduction of workplace creches. This clearly symbolises a great change, as <del>new</del> social equality had become obs as the equality between men and women had improved, thus leading to a shift in gender roles. Also, a positive disadvantage was introduced to benefit the working class students, thus meaning that 26% of university students were from working class backgrounds by 1949. However, the change is somewhat limited by the fact that there was still a prioritisation for women to increase the birthrate after the war, and there was only a small increase from 20% to 26% of women in higher education by <del>1959</del> 1959. Therefore, it is clear that there was more societal change than economic change in the GDR.</p>
		<p>Arguably, the economy did see some change during the period. The emphasis on 5 Year Plans led to economic and industrial growth, namely the annual growth of 8% achieved in 1958 and 1959. Also, the shift from centralisation to NOSPL in 1963 is a clear change, leading to increased economic output and a more decentralised economy. Also, the agricultural sector saw change with the introduction of LPGs, which controlled 65% of agricultural land by 1962. This can be seen as a great change, as it shows the direct shift from a Capitalist to a Communist style of economy. To limit</p>

		<p>this, the LPGs had a very insignificant impact until the second wave of collectivisation in 1960, with only 3% of land collectivised in 1950. Also, the economic change was hindered by both the brain drain and the ideological inflexibility of communist <del>ide</del> economies, with only limited growth achieved while adhering to the centralised plans. Therefore, it is clear that the society of the GDR changed more than the economy.</p>
		<p>Overall, the society of the GDR saw greater change in the period than the economy. The implementation of policy to change the fabric of society, namely greater support for women and changes to the education system, led to dramatic change. While the shift from Capitalism to Communism was a great change to the economy, it was hindered by bureaucracy and a lack of support. Therefore, the GDR's society changed more than its economy.</p>

### Misconception



The A Level specification clearly uses the term DDR in the 'Divided Germany 1949-1963' key topic. In this question a significant number of candidates confused the FRG with the DDR. Candidates need to take care to learn what the different countries were called.

## Question 2 (b)\*

(b)\* 'The terms of the Treaty of Versailles were the main reason for Hitler's rise in the period from 1919 to January 1933.' How far do you agree? [20]

This question elicited the full range of responses with many candidates displaying excellent subject knowledge. The dates in the question were sometimes overlooked with a number evaluating the role of the Reichstag Fire and Enabling Act, which were beyond the remit of this question. There were some descriptive responses which recounted the 1920s in great detail but without demonstrating how this led to Hitler's rise. Such responses were restricted to Level 2 or Level 3. The best responses explained throughout their paragraphs and explored links between the factors when assessing the reasons for Hitler's rise. Exemplar 3 draws the various factors together in the concluding judgement and was given Level 5.

## Exemplar 3

2	b	The statement is wrong to suggest the terms of the Treaty of Versailles were the main reason for Hitler's rise to power. <del>The</del> The Great Depression was also a factor but political intrigue was the main reason.
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		The terms of the Treaty of Versailles were not the main reason for Hitler's rise to power. Under it, Germany lost huge swathes of territory (such as its colonies and Alsace-Lorraine), its army was cut to 100,000 men and under Article 231, Germany was to accept guilt for the war and be liable to pay 132 billion marks in reparations. Many saw this as a diktat which Germany was forced to sign and many Germans thought they had been 'stabbed in the back'. Hitler used this and the
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suffering it caused to increase his own power <sup>at party and local level</sup> ~~at party and local level~~. However, he was unable to use it completely to seize power <sup>nationally</sup> and still had to rely on 2 other things to gain control. ~~By the time the Nazis were close to controlling Germany in 1932, arguably the Great Depression had more of an impact on increasing votes. Therefore, the terms of the Treaty of Versailles were not the main reason for Hitler's rise to power.~~

The Great Depression was also not

the main reason for Hitler's rise to power. Following the Wall Street Crash in October 1929, there was a huge global recession. This hit Germany very hard as it was relying on American loans to fuel industry. When these were recalled on short notice, the German economy came close to collapse. By 1932, 6.2 million were unemployed. The Nazis used this to their advantage. Many young people joined the SA and SS unable to find work, while propaganda promising work, bread, and a return to Germany's former glory was attractive to many. This contributed to the Nazis winning 230 seats in

July 1932. However, the Great Depression never gave them <sup>national</sup> power as Hitler did not want to form a coalition government. ~~This was especially~~ ~~main~~ This led to a decline in votes to 196 in November 1932 as some were tired of false promises. Therefore, the Great Depression was also not the main reason for Hitler's rise to power.

Political intrigue was the main

reason for Hitler's rise to power. Political intrigue was when political leaders conspired in secret to remove the current leader and replace them with someone else. It happened to Brüning when he was replaced with von Papen, and when von Papen was replaced with von Schleicher. It also happened when Hitler replaced von Schleicher. Without it, it is difficult to see how Hitler would have come to power. By mid-1932, the party was declining. It was almost bankrupt from election campaigns and was struggling to keep voters who were tired of Hitler's false promises. This is evidenced by the Nazis winning 230 seats in July 1932 and 196 seats in November 1932. This decline



meant political intrigue came at the right time for Hitler. Without it, it's possible ~~the~~ the Weimar Republic could have continued, overcome the Great Depression, and the Nazis would be diminished. Therefore, political intrigue was the main reason for Hitler's rise to power.

Overall, political intrigue was the main reason for Hitler's rise to power. It's true that the 'stab-in-the-back' theory from the Treaty of Versailles and the Great Depression helped increase Hitler's power at a party and Reichstag level, however Hitler would have never got national power if ~~it~~ political intrigue had not occurred, especially considering the party's declining power from mid-1932.

### Assessment for learning



A number of candidates wrote about material from beyond the scope of the question. Candidates need to pay careful attention to the wording and the dates in the question.

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