

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y220/01 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.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Paper Y220/01 series overview

Y220/01 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"> • gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short-answer essay • reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important • linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question • discussed at least two relevant issues in depth • gave supporting detail that was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic • reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question • made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way • produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response • were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question • showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay • were unable to support their response with relevant or accurate material • did not focus on the precise wording of the question • made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

Question 1 (a)

1 (a) Which of the following had the greater impact on the development of Italy during the years from 1896 to 1915?

(i) Economic problems

(ii) Political failure

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

[10]

The purpose of this question was for candidates to provide a comparative analysis of these two issues in relation to Italy's development during the years from 1896 to 1915. Most candidates made an attempt to analyse both issues.

In relation to 'economic problems' most candidates referred to the problem of the North/South divide and the impact of strikes. More accomplished responses also included the number of Italians who emigrated, particularly to the USA, and the low wages and long hours of workers in comparison to the rest of Europe. Very few went on to refer to the impact of tariffs or the post 1908 economic decline.

When analysing 'political failure' most responses referred to the rise of socialism and the emergence of militant nationalism in relation to foreign policy. A significant number of responses referred to 'trasformismo' and some responses explained it but didn't fully analyse it in relation to Italy's development. Very few responses referred to the wave of riots and the assassination of Umberto I in 1900.

Question 1 (b)*

(b)* 'In the period from 1925 to 1940, Mussolini's domestic policy was a success.' How far do you agree? [20]

The focus of this question was to analyse and assess how successful Mussolini's domestic policy was in the period from 1925 to 1940. Most responses were able to explain a number of policies. In some cases, responses were descriptive. Very few responses provided a wide range of policies. Most responses focused on policies associated with economic and social issues such as the various 'Battles' and policies towards women, youth, and the Jews. Some responses also included The Corporate State and the Lateran Treaty. Very few responses analysed Mussolini's political success in establishing a dictatorship and overcoming opposition. There was also limited reference to his reliance on propaganda.

There were a significant number of responses that, despite their knowledge and understanding of Mussolini's domestic policy restricted their analysis to giving a one-sided response either by only analysing success or failure. A balanced response of both sides of the argument is necessary to achieve the higher levels of the mark scheme. A one-sided response is a partial analysis and, therefore, is a Level 3 response.

Exemplar 1

	In conclusion, to a limited extent Mussolini's domestic policy
	was a success from 1925-1940. His economic policy failed at
	achieving its aims of self-sufficiency and portraying Italy as a major
	power. It's ultimate failure was that it did not prepare Italy for war
	as in 1940 Italy's domestic production was only 1/5 of what it needed
	for Italy to go to war. His policy concerning the church was
	relatively successful in the early years as it strengthened the regime
	but it was a failure by 1940 due to other policies he pursued such
	as his manifesto in 1938. Mussolini's social policy in terms of
	education was a large success as it ensured there would be another
	generations of fascists. However, overall Mussolini's domestic
	policy was unsuccessful from 1925-1940.

Exemplar 1 is a good attempt to provide a concluding paragraph for a balanced essay for an assessment of whether Mussolini's domestic policy was a success for Question 1 (b).

Assessment for learning



When providing responses for the traditional style essay question, candidates should make sure they reach interim judgements at the end of each factor and a concluding judgement in order to access Level 5 and Level 6 of the mark scheme.

Question 2 (a)

2 (a) Which of the following did more to bring about the fall of Fascist Italy?

- (i) Its preparations for war in the years before 1940
- (ii) The domestic impact of war upon Italy during the period from 1940 to 1943

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

[10]

The purpose of this question was for candidates to provide a comparison of these two issues in relation to their part in bringing about the fall of Fascist Italy.

When considering 'preparations for war' most candidates made references to the failure of economic policies to provide a basis for equipping the armed forces or providing resources that meant Italy was self-sufficient in war. Also, that war in Abyssinia and Spain drained Italy's military resources. Many responses did not fully analyse how these failings influenced the downfall of Fascist Italy. The analysis tended to be implicit.

In terms of the 'domestic impact of war' many candidates were confident in providing evidence of Italy's military failures between 1940 and 1943 and that they brought about the downfall of Fascist Italy. However, a significant number of responses went on to explain what happened to Mussolini from 1943 to his death in 1945.

Misconception



Question 2(a) concerned the 'fall of Fascist Italy,' not the death of Mussolini in 1945.

Question 2 (b)*

(b)* How consistent was Mussolini's foreign policy during the years 1922 to 1940?

[20]

The purpose of this question was to analyse and assess whether Mussolini's foreign policy was consistent during the years 1922 to 1940. The key word in the question is 'consistent'. Candidates should have considered this word carefully. The better responses realised that foreign policy could be measured by either analysing Mussolini's aims or his methods or preferably both. A significant number of responses focused their analysis on showing whether Mussolini's foreign policy was successful. Some responses provided a one-sided response arguing that either his foreign policy was consistent or in other cases that it was not. To reach the higher levels, responses needed to consider both sides of the discussion.

When considering whether Mussolini's foreign policy was consistent most candidates referred to consistent aggression in Corfu, Abyssinia, Spain, and Albania. More accomplished responses referred to consistent expansionist policy in the Mediterranean, Balkans, and North Africa. Very few candidates referred to the consistent alignment with stronger powers such as Britain and Germany or the consistent use of propaganda.

The responses that reached the higher levels were those that analysed the arguments that suggested Mussolini's foreign policy was not consistent. Those arguments were that Mussolini wavered between a desire for war and a desire for peace, his initial commitment to the League of Nations and his subsequent opposition and his differing attitudes to German policy regarding Austria. Those candidates that discussed these counterarguments used more knowledge and analysis of foreign policy in the 1920's and, therefore, covered the period 1922-40.

Exemplar 2

	Overall, it is clear that Mussolini's foreign policy was mostly consistent to his three main aims during the years 1922-40. Whilst there are several exceptions, these can be considered insignificant in relation to comparison to the dominant strategy of aggression and defence ^{to} demonstrated by foreign policy activity throughout this period. In fact, opportunism was also ^{often} central to the instances in which Mussolini seemed to abandon his three aims: the Kellogg-Briand Pact that whilst counter-acting Mussolini's own beliefs, did provide Italy with security against invasion, and the Munich Conference, whilst seemingly not benefitting Italy, was used to present Mussolini as a moderate statesman, and to ^{to} demand concessions for his mediator role. This aspect demonstrated accord with the opportunistic streak to Mussolini's three main foreign policy aims, which often took advantage of current ^{current} conditions to benefit Italy. Thus, there is strong evidence to suggest that most of Mussolini's foreign policy and ^{activity} was demonstrated consistency.
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Exemplar 2 is a good attempt to provide a concluding paragraph which shows that the response has focused on arguments both for and against consistency in Mussolini's foreign policy in Question 2 (b).

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