

AS

# HISTORY

7041/20: Democracy and Nazism: Germany, 1918-1945  
Report on the Examination

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7041  
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## General

Most students responded well to the demands of the paper, particularly in relation to the compulsory sources question, where appropriate technique seemed to have been more firmly embedded than in previous years. The essay questions also produced some good responses, although the question on right-wing extremism (Q02) was considerably more popular than that on cultural change (Q03). The comments which follow are indicative of some of the strengths and weaknesses commonly seen in students' answers in this paper.

### Question 01

Students found the sources in Question 01 accessible and were generally able to provide a balanced evaluation of each source. The vast majority of students were comparative in their judgements and maintained a focus on value. The most effective answers provided comment on value throughout, whereas the less effective answers tended to address value through a concluding judgement, rather than adopting an integrated approach. A minority of students, having provided two independent commentaries, failed to compare the sources at all. More effective answers, whilst considering the overall argument of the source, tended to identify more than one argument in each source. This was more successful than a line-by-line approach as it provided more opportunity to demonstrate higher-level thinking. Contextual knowledge was used most effectively in relation to Source A where a number of students were able to deploy specific supporting knowledge citing the Reichstag Fire and subsequent meetings in the Kroll Opera House. A significant number of students were also able to comment on the use of the SA and intimidation. Source B tended to elicit more generalised comment on the lack of effective opposition to the Nazi Party in terms of the position of the Centre Party. Some students also made reference to the split within the left-wing opposition.

Comment on provenance was mostly appropriate and there was some pertinent evaluation of tone for both of the sources, but in particular source A. In less effective responses, comments on provenance and tone tended to be generic and failed to relate to the key issue – the passing of the Enabling Act. Focus on this key issue was also sometimes lacking in the discussion of content, and instead a generalised commentary was provided. However, the majority of students seemed to appreciate the importance of linking value to the issue identified in the question. One or two students erroneously commented on events following the passing of the Enabling Act, whilst some gave a generalised factor-by-factor account of the rise of the Nazi Party prior to 1933. Although not commonly seen, there were some responses which adopted a Paper One approach (evaluating the historical argument) rather than a Paper 2 approach. This would suggest that the understanding of the differing requirements of the two components was insecure for a minority of students.

### Question 02

This was the most popular question and many students were able to demonstrate an understanding of the challenge of right-wing extremism during the period identified. As would be expected for a depth paper, there was often a range of clear and sometimes specific supporting information. The majority of students provided some comment on the Kapp Putsch and the Munich Putsch, whilst some referenced Organisation Consul. More able students identified more endemic and deep-rooted threats to the Weimar Republic, such as the continuing power of right-wing elites, particularly in the judiciary. Some students were even able to support this with statistics relating to inequitable convictions regarding political assassinations, although less able students, whilst often providing valid commentaries, produced more limited contextual support for their arguments.

A significant number of students opted to consider additional threats to the Weimar Republic in an attempt to provide an evaluative approach. Comment on the fear of communism was often present, and balancing evidence was provided using the Spartacist Uprising as a left-wing threat to the new republic. Further contextual knowledge addressing wider threats to the Weimar Republic often referenced the 'Stab in the Back' myth and resentment of the SPD. Whilst the majority of students provided appropriate balanced evaluation, some responses contained a generalised list of threats to the new republic and did not focus on the issue of right-wing extremism sufficiently. For example, comment may have been provided regarding the economic difficulties facing the republic, but, if this was not linked to the key issue, the response could potentially remain generalised, therefore limiting access to the higher levels. It should be emphasised to students that there is an expectation that there should be meaningful comment given on the key focus of the question. Very occasionally, answers were seen where confusion between left and right-wing was evident.

### **Question 03**

The most successful responses to this question focused on cultural changes and avoided a generalised response. More able students understood the link between cultural changes and support for the republic. Detailed knowledge of cultural changes in the arts, architecture, cinema and literature was frequently in evidence and often comment was given regarding the nightclub scene in Berlin. A significant number of responses commented upon social change, such as the role of women and young people or the assimilation of the Jewish population. Provided this was effectively linked back to culture and levels of support for the republic, such comment was taken as valid. More evaluative responses also differentiated between the effects of cultural changes in rural and urban areas, or the differing responses of different age groups. Quite a number mentioned the continuing influence of the Church.

However, less successful responses tended to provide a descriptive account of the period. Despite possessing some good knowledge, these less analytical answers received lesser reward than those which addressed the key issue more explicitly. Lack of clear relevance was an issue with this question and less successful answers could not formulate a balanced argument and veered into generalised 'Golden Age' responses. A minority of answers misunderstood the focus of the question entirely and instead gave an account of economic or political events and issues spanning 1924-1928. Some students also went beyond the time frame of the question, particularly if they had given undue emphasis to economic issues and the work of Stresemann. It must be stressed that remaining within the given time frame is extremely important if appropriate focus is to be maintained.

### **Use of statistics**

Statistics used in this report may be taken from incomplete processing data. However, this data still gives a true account on how students have performed for each question.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.