



A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/2K: International Relations and Global Conflict, c1890–
1941

Report on the Examination

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Section A

Question 1

There were three elements to this question: an evaluation of provenance and tone, an evaluation of content and argument (both requiring some application of own knowledge) and a judgment regarding the value of each source in relation to the question of reactions to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. There is no requirement for students to provide comparative judgement and this is not rewarded, although a number of answers once again did. It is pleasing to report that the quality of responses to this question has improved since the last series, with fewer generic responses to provenance and a better overall grasp of the source content. This has seen an improvement in the mean mark by around 5%, with around three-quarters of answers getting into level 3 and above, with more responses achieving higher level 4 and some level 5 marks this series. However, there are still issues with using relevant context and an over-reliance on omission to offer judgements.

In terms of provenance, a wide number of responses are still showing an overly constraining mechanistic approach in which they feel the need to discuss all elements of origin regardless of whether or not this has an impact on value. Although more able students were able to recognise the importance of the authors and how this impacted on content and thus overall value:

- source A as an Austrian newspaper overemphasized the grief surrounding the assassination and the sympathetic responses from both within and outside the Empire, with a distinctly patriotic slant
- source B demonstrates two distinctly opposing points of view, valuable in coming from both sides of the alliances and showing some German disdain at Russia's decision to support Serbia in the aftermath of the killing
- source C offers more of an outside view, though its purpose makes the views doubtful as they seem to suggest that the British government's lack of response was somewhat more justified than might be believed.

Less effective answers offered blander and more generic statements regarding provenance, making points that were simply not reflected in the source content such as suggesting that because source B came from a German report it could not possibly give us a reliable view of the Russian response, and that source C was overwhelmingly valuable just because it has hindsight. There were still a significant number of students who simply stated the provenance of each source; for instance, many simply stated that source A was valuable as it was written on the day of the assassination (although some even managed to incorrectly suggest that it was written the day after the assassination, despite the clear attribution) or that it was not valuable as it was an Austrian newspaper. Overall, most responses were able to accurately identify the tone of each source, though a large number simply stated this without linking tone directly to value. The best answers spotted that the emotive nature of source A may have been designed to unify the Austrian people behind a leadership which continued to seek a motive for crushing Serbia, whilst source C overplays the calm response of other nations in an attempt to justify both Lloyd George's own, and general British, response to the assassination.

On the whole, students responded better to the content of each source than the provenance and many could contextualise this content to offer judgements on value. However, the weakest of the sources in terms of addressing content was source A. Many chose to brush past the various elements offered regarding supposed responses to the assassination, instead focusing, incorrectly, on the fact that the newspaper was simply advocating war with Serbia followed by unlinked context

on the progress of the July Crisis. More effective answers picked apart the false assertions made by the paper; Franz Joseph disliked his nephew so was unlikely to be in great mourning and as the assassination was barely even reported in Western Europe, it was unlikely that there was such a great outpouring of sympathy as suggested. Source B's content was better recognised as explaining why Russia moved to support Serbia against Austria-Hungary, contextualised by their past interactions which brought 'hatred' and a criticism of swift actions against the Serbian government despite a lack of proof regarding their involvement in the assassination. There was some flawed context here, with much assertion that the Russian foreign minister was completely incorrect to refer to the assassins as group of 'immature youths' due to explicit Serbian government involvement. Some of the least effective responses decided to focus purely on the German view presented, without any mention of the Russian response to the assassination that dominates the source.

A similar theme was shown in source C, with much focus on the final statements about the threat of war rather than the overall argument that most nations offered little initial response to the assassination. More effective answers recognised that the immediate response was one of calm, political turmoil in the Balkan region was nothing new, but that under the surface the July Crisis was brewing. The most successful responses noted how Lloyd George significantly underplayed the response of the German's and French, with the 'Blank Cheque' soon following, despite the Kaiser's holiday, and that the French visit to Russia actually helped to define the slow nature of the Austrian response. Some less effective responses chose to simply state Lloyd George's view as utterly incorrect as the response was far more serious than he portrays, failing to consider the lack of immediate response and Lloyd George's selective nature in war memoirs designed to relieve himself of any blame in the outbreak of the First World War. Overall, one of the continuing concerns with the addressing of content comes in attempts to insist that this is flawed due to what the source 'fails to mention', without an understanding of why this content is missing. This approach often becomes an excuse to simply list any other own knowledge that the student has and does not offer a valid judgement on the value of the source itself; students need to assess the value of what is there rather than simply stating what is omitted.

The most effective answers overall were those best able to provide successfully supported judgements, mostly by offering a paragraph exploring the various reasons why a source was valuable and then a paragraph exploring the reasons why the source was not valuable, selecting the relevant areas of provenance, tone and content as necessary, and offering a short overall judgement for each. This approach gave a more effective result than those which followed a step-by-step approach to provenance, tone, content and context; this mechanistic type response often failed to grasp the overarching issues within the sources and could not provide sound judgements as they often stated information about the sources rather than using it to address value. Although increasingly less prevalent, there were still answers which did not address value at all. Such a response cannot move out of level 2, and a significant number had very limited links to value, which would result in a low level 3 mark. This year also saw a number of responses take an unusual approach to assessing the sources purely through the means of provenance and tone without any reference to the actual content of the source; despite the contextualised nature of these responses, the failure to explicitly address what the sources were saying meant that these answers ended up in low level 3 at best.

Section B

It was pleasing to see that there was even spread in terms of choice of question in Section B, with no one combination across the options standing out as the most obvious. However, it is fair to say that the three questions were handled with significantly varying levels of success.

Question 2

This question was attempted by the most students but unfortunately elicited the least effective responses across the three questions. The major weakness was that although the vast majority of responses clearly understood the Moroccan Crisis itself and identified the significant impact it had on relations between Germany, France and Britain, a significant majority of students were unable to offer significant, or even any, balance to their response. For those without balance, it seems that the stem of 'significance' caused confusion, with students apparently believing they have fully addressed the question by proving that the crisis had a very significant impact on international relations. However, balance could only be achieved by demonstrating that the crisis may be seen as not that significant - it ended peacefully after all - or that other factors had a more significant impact in the period. More effective answers recognised that factors such as the creation of alliances, emerging issues in the Balkans or Russo-Japanese War had a greater effect, with the most effective answers able to form a judgement through showing the inter-relationship of factors. For instance, although the Naval Race could be seen as more significant, the Moroccan Crisis had significantly worsened relations between Britain and Germany which then sparked the escalation of the Naval Race itself. Those with weaker balance often did not stick to the dates of the question, with much description of a whole host of events pre-1904 that were supposedly more significant and many stating that the Second Moroccan Crisis was far more significant, which is certainly not the case for international relations in the years 1904 to 1907.

Question 3

Responses to this question elicited a good spread of marks and it was pleasing to see that the vast majority of students were aware of the concept of the 'spirit of Locarno' and could offer both strengths and weaknesses of this period, which saw around 70% of responses achieve level 3 and above. The vast majority referenced the key events of the period, Dawes, the Locarno Treaties themselves and the Kellogg-Briand Pact, assessing a range of positives and negatives in achieving international harmony, with some good conceptual awareness that many of these acts appeared harmonious on the surface, but were actually deeply flawed. For instance despite 62 nations agreeing to not using war as a means of solving issues, there were no sanctions for anyone who failed to stick to these terms. There were some blander statements when assessing the failures of the Dawes Plan, only really discussing the economic flaws of a reliance on the US economy rather than the significance for international relations. However, many rightly pointed out that the Wall Street Crash would see a collapse of harmony as 1929 drew to a close. Less effective responses didn't really grasp when the 'spirit' began, generally clumping all international incidents in the 1920s into this concept, for example describing the Polish-Soviet War and incidents in Vilna, Upper Silesia and the Aaland Islands. The least effective answers included all international relations from the end of the First World War, which then mostly became a general review of the success of the League of Nations step-by-step. Some responses also did not address the concept of 'by 1929', instead offering a balance that stated the 'spirit' clearly failed due to incidents like the Manchurian Invasion, rise of Hitler and Abyssinian Crisis, an assessment that is irrelevant in trying to explain if international harmony had been achieved 'by 1929'. Overall, those that predominantly stuck to the period in the question and assessed the success by 1929 achieved at the higher levels.

Question 4

The final question elicited the best responses of the three optional questions as a result of wide ranging knowledge which meant that almost 50% of answers here achieved higher level marks. There was much specific and precise evidence on the long term reasons for US entry, with many conceptually aware of the moral and financial reasons why the US may well have inevitably entered the war without the attack on Pearl Harbor. Many answers addressed the Cash & Carry

and Lend Lease schemes which saw huge investment in the Allies and meant that the US had a vested interest in an Allied victory. The most effective answers recognised that the continuing Nazi advance, which by 1941 challenged the USSR, made it increasingly likely that the US would have to step in eventually, otherwise their \$50 billion investment would have been unrecoverable. The most effective answers linked this clearly to Pearl Harbor, suggesting that despite this continued shift in support for the Allies, this is all that it was, with isolationist opinion not swayed by the Atlantic Charter and Roosevelt's 'Fireside Chats'; it would take a physical assault on US soil to convert the public to a pro-war sentiment. However, in many cases the response to Pearl Harbor itself was more limited. Although most recognised the devastating impact of the attack and the immediacy of the declarations of war (though the understanding of the timeline of this varied considerably), many answers only offered a brief paragraph on Pearl Harbor and then turned to a long response on all of the other reasons why the US entered the war. This approach was often limited to the top of level 3 for a lack of analysis in direct relation to the question. Those that could link each point back to explain why Pearl Harbor was or was not the only reason for US entry moved into level 4. The least effective answers addressed the use of Pearl Harbor as an 'excuse' for entry into the war, focusing heavily on the now debunked conspiracy theory that the US government knew Pearl Harbor was going to be attacked and let it happen on purpose so they could declare war. More effective answers used the suggestion that the US were aware of the threat of a Japanese attack, though believed it would be in the Philippines, to suggest how unprepared they were for war. Thus, the attack on Pearl Harbor must have been the reason for entry into the war.

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.