



A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/20: Democracy and Nazism: Germany, 1918-1945
Report on the Examination

7042
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General

Overall, students found the paper accessible and tackled it well. Many were able to write confidently with considerable detail about the value of the sources in 01 for the given topic of resistance to the Nazis, as well as producing well argued, balanced essays backed up by precisely selected evidence and support. Students do still need to link provenance with knowledge, in 01, to value; this is an area which can be developed further to make answers even more effective and focused. In terms of the essays, some students still need to hone their skills of analysis, backed up with clear supporting evidence but, above all perhaps, build a coherent and sustained line of argument through their answers.

Question 01

Many students were clearly well prepared on this topic of resistance to the Nazis during the Second World War and were able to build on the material in the three sources to focus on their value to an historian. Most students found all three sources accessible and were able to investigate both provenance and content in order to assess value. The more successful students were able to explicitly link provenance to value rather than making bland and general comments on reliability or timing.

Students found Source A quite challenging in terms of identifying where the German invasion of the Soviet Union stood by the start of 1942. Too many students focused on Germany's defeat at Stalingrad in this source; this was far more relevant for Source B. Some students also found Source C challenging, as it was from a leading Nazi whereas the other two sources came from resistance groups.

The more successful answers also considered what is meant by value; some less effective answers claimed, somewhat simplistically, that propaganda lacks value, thereby equating value with accuracy and truth or reliability. It was very refreshing to read answers where students fully assessed that all viewpoints, propaganda or otherwise, have value.

Some students are still setting out a contextual overview as an introduction as well as providing a similar conclusion where the sources are being compared; this is not necessary for this question.

Finally, on 01, it is important for students to understand that this paper is a depth study and that accurate and appropriate contextual knowledge, used to assess value by scrutinising the content and provenance, is necessary for the higher levels. Less effective answers simply asserted that provenance identified was or was not valuable without explaining this and this was the same with the content. Successful responses, however, did include a summative judgement at the end of each source to bring their points together.

Question 02

This proved to be the least popular question this year, but many students who did attempt this question did so successfully. For the most part, students produced a range of evidence arguing that Germany was not overwhelmingly traditional and conservative in the years 1924 to 1929, focusing on groups such as women, youth and the Jews, as well as cultural changes such as architecture, literature, music and attitudes towards homosexuality. These students also provided meaningful balance, questioning the extent of these changes and how widely accepted they were. Some students took a more political route to this question; this had some validity but the lack of focus on society did hinder the quality of the responses.

Less effective responses tended to describe, rather than evaluate, the changes or answered in a more generic way on the so-called ‘Golden Years’ of the Weimar Republic.

Students are reminded of the importance of developing and sustaining a clear line of argument to access the higher levels; in this case, a real focus on the idea of ‘overwhelmingly’ gave that opportunity to evaluate the balanced points that were often made.

Question 03

This was a very popular question and it is clear that students were very well prepared for the topic of Hitler gaining the Chancellorship of Germany in 1933 and the reasons for it. There were some very good responses to this question, which displayed a clear and developed understanding of von Papen’s role in the context of the broader reasons for Hitler becoming Chancellor.

Most students had some understanding of Papen’s role at the very end of this timeframe in terms of his negotiations with Hitler and his persuasive powers with regards to Hindenburg. The most effective answers built on this platform and linked his actions to his relationship with von Schleicher and also his own role as Chancellor between May and November 1932. More effective answers compared his role with that of other individuals in 1932-3, such as Brüning, as well as von Schleicher and Hindenburg, but also with the actions and tactics of Hitler himself.

Many students also successfully broadened their answer to include the 1932 election results and reasons for Hitler’s electoral success, especially in July, often linking it to the fear of Communism as well as the continuing ravages of the Depression and the failure of parliamentary democracy to tackle it effectively. Less effective answers produced far more general responses on Hitler’s rise to power without either focusing on Papen and the period of ‘backstairs intrigue’ or on the broader aspects suggested above. Instead, generic responses to Hitler’s ideas, the Weimar Constitution and Versailles were given priority. This underpins the importance for students to explicitly focus on the question in order to achieve the higher levels.

Question 04

This was also a popular question and was answered well by many students. More effective answers were built around the key idea and issue of ‘consistency’. These students were able to develop examples showing a consistent approach taken by the Nazis towards the Jews and other minority groups based on the desire to exclude them from German society, or on provoking emigration. Successful answers also focused on the idea that whilst policies may have changed based on circumstances, attitudes remained fairly consistent. Many students identified key turning points which suggested inconsistency, such as the Berlin Olympics, Kristallnacht or the of the Second World War and the invasions of Poland and the USSR. These students were able to construct a coherent and sustained argument, backed up with valid examples across the timeframe of the question.

Less effective answers either based their responses solely on the Jews or used a descriptive approach, simply tagging an unconvincing link to consistency at the end. Students were overall less effective in assessing the non-Jewish minority groups, although those that were able to integrate a range of groups into their overall argument, with clear supporting evidence and balance, performed well.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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