

HISTORY (WORLD AFFAIRS 1917-1991)

Paper 2158/01

Paper 1

General comments

The overwhelming impression of the work of the candidates who presented themselves for examination this summer was that it was of a high quality. Many candidates, a greater proportion than usual, achieved a very high standard. The quality that most impressed in the work of such candidates was the understanding they conveyed of World History in the years 1917–91, evidenced both in factual range and accuracy, as well as in focused relevance and understanding. In such cases, careful and thoughtful work was repaid by the award of the highest grades.

Candidates achieving middle and lower grades often presented material which had direction and relevance in some areas, but was not sufficiently sustained in range and detail of factual support. Sometimes material was not made relevant to the precise requirements of the analytical parts of the questions (as cited below).

It is regrettable that there is still a minority of candidates whose work cannot be classified. In order to improve their work to an acceptable level, such candidates need to concentrate on both acquiring more accurate and detailed information, but also in seeking to understand the significance and importance of factual data in its historic setting. In that way they may be better prepared to respond both to the demands of the purely factual parts of the questions, as well as to the concluding analytical parts.

Most candidates are sensible in placing the letter or figure of the sub-parts of a question in their answers and also in indicating, by leaving a line and a suitably worded start after it, where it is that the final, analytical part of the answer commences. Such practice is helpful to the candidates in ensuring that their answers meet question requirements and are approached in a logical way.

Comments on specific questions

There were few attempts at **Questions 6, 9, 10, 11, 16 (b), 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 31.**

Question 1

Few candidates had difficulty with the 'structure' of the League of Nations, although sometimes there was uncertainty about the vital difference between the assembly and council. If anything answers to this part tended to be too long, to the comparative neglect of 'aims' and 'membership'. In these two areas, material on 'aims' could have been taken further to include the socio-economic, as well as diplomatic, aims of the League, while 'membership' got variable treatment beyond the well recognised absence of the USA. Better candidates did focus clearly on the last part, indicating the damage - and in the best cases also the limitations of the damage - done by League approaches to Manchuria. A minority of candidates wasted time with irrelevant comment on League activity in other areas.

Question 2

There were often competent descriptions, which were well focused on the 1936–38 period, offered for the first part. Some candidates failed to recognise that it was the policy of appeasement that needed to be described and not the course of international relations in the given years. Background detail was therefore of some importance here. Munich was the essential feature in the first part and while many candidates did deal with the issue of the Sudetenland with knowledge and good contextual understanding, others paid it scant attention. A common error in the last part was to forget about Munich as past history and focus only on Poland. In fact the abandonment of appeasement began in March 1939 with the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and it was disappointing that few candidates noted this before proceeding to the events of the autumn.

Question 3

Few candidates had difficulty in recognising accurately the basic significance of the events they were asked to write about. The best candidates sketched the historic context of the event and provided detail on what happened and what the outcome was. They were to be distinguished in the degree of security they gave in their responses and the detail with which they supported their ideas. Almost all candidates made out a good case for the value of US involvement in their answers to the last part; no candidate challenged the question's assumption. The economic, military and psychological impact of the US entry to the war was often well treated.

Question 4

Although, inevitably some candidates confused features of the Korean War with the Vietnam War, this was not a widespread fault. Most showed a competent grasp of detail in all areas, not least in the more challenging first part on the events leading up to 1950. The course of the war seemed to be well known by almost all candidates, with appropriate emphasis on the first twelve months and responses were sometimes developed at length. Answers to the last part were often thoughtfully balanced between developments and features in each part of the peninsula, as well as wider international developments.

Question 5

It may be that Cold War events are better known in an earlier period than the declining decades of the 1970s and 1980s with which this question was concerned. Sadly a distinct number of the candidates who attempted this question did not write about the given period, but instead about events in the preceding decades; such candidates had little to say also on the last part. However, for a number of candidates this was a suitable choice. They developed balanced and informed answers based on the two decades specified and deduced well drawn conclusions on the reasons for the end of the Cold War in 1991.

Question 6

Few candidates who attempted this socio-economic question produced a viable answer with specific references for support. Candidates should in no way approach a question such as this in the belief that it is a 'soft option' and should only attempt it if they have sufficiently precise material to bring to bear in all its parts.

Question 7

Responses to this fairly popular question were mixed in quality. The 'factors' referred to in the first part were sometimes rather narrowly viewed, only the better answers dealing with the situation of Italy in these years, as well as the aims and progress that Mussolini made. More noticeable as a defect was the tendency to finish the response in 1922, neglecting the next two or three years which were specifically required by the wording of the question. Others dealt generally with events after 1922, not making it clear whether material here belonged to the first or the last part of the response. In the last part itself the view of most candidates was that the rule of Mussolini was 'totalitarian', few taking the opportunity to address the 'how far' element of the question to indicate areas, such as the papacy and the monarchy, that suggested some limitation on his control.

Question 8

Of the three options **Question (b)** was probably the best attempted, most candidates writing about the imposed curriculum in school as well as the features of the Hitler Youth. In part **(a)** there was often uncertainty and generalisation, such as a plea that an increased army needed increased industrial output. It was surprising that features such as the work of Schacht and the Four Year Plan were not more in evidence; some weaker candidates produced no economic references at all. In **(c)** there was a common tendency to discuss the Holocaust which was not part of the timeframe of the question, although the features of the 1930s were also mentioned.

Question 12

The first part of this popular question was usually answered well in all three elements. The Ku Klux Klan was certainly well known in both factual detail and significance. Prohibition and gangsterism were also recognised and supported and were usually effectively linked. Valid examples of the booming economy abounded, often with wide range, in the last of the three sub-questions. Weakness was more apparent in the last part. Here too many appeared to have given too superficial a reading of the question and wrote about the impact of the Wall Street Crash rather than on why it had such impact. Nevertheless, there were good attempts at the last part by a number who observed the vital significance of the Crash on the economic health of the nation.

Question 13

The USA in the 1920s and 1930s appears to be a popular area of study, judging by the generally good responses and popularity of this and the preceding question. Most who attempted this question illustrated their responses with a wide range of clear detail, sometimes introducing the legislative package with thoughtful contextual observations and also considering the purpose of various features of the New Deal. Viable attempts were made at the last part, many of them introducing new aspects about the impact of legislation not covered in the first part. Better candidates were able to put Roosevelt's work into broader global context, showing his avoidance of the extremes of fascism and communism in the steady, practical work he undertook.

Question 14

Answers to **Question 14** were a shade disappointing and, compared with the previous two questions, this had fewer takers. Detail in **(a)** was not usually as thorough as it might have been in this well known area and while most indicated that Little Rock was a practical consequence of the earlier Brown vs. Topeka judgement, factual knowledge again lacked strength. In part **(c)** the details on the legislation could have been more strongly rendered. More disappointing was the last part, where the classic error of confusing the Black Power movement with the work of Martin Luther King was too much in evidence.

Question 15

The Watergate Scandal was known in its essentials by all candidates, but mostly it was developed rather poorly and with some uncertainty. Often there was too strong an emphasis on the final threatened impeachment and too little on the unfolding of events leading up to that point. There were a number of spirited attempts at the last part, with fair 1970s context, but knowledge of consequent legislation in the USA in this respect was usually missing and could have been used to support a good answer.

Question 16 (a)

Both rulers were known for the basic features of their domestic and foreign policies in **(i)** and **(ii)**, but the material included in support for each was somewhat bland and lacking in distinction, a trend taken further by the practice of most candidates to present the approaches of one ruler as the reverse of those of the other. More could have been made of Batista's links within Latin America as well as with the USA and more attention paid to Castro's novel approach to the problems he inherited. Similarly, the last part was not very well supported.

Question 17

Of the three sub-questions, it was probably part **(c)** that produced the best results, most candidates observing that there were two economic policies and showing an ability to develop the purpose and effect of each. While **(a)** was often well attempted by candidates who considered the range of Provisional Government activity between February and October 1917, a number focused too heavily on the unseating of the Tsar in February, to the comparative neglect of what followed. Part **(b)** usually had links to Trotsky and the Civil War, but could have developed the role of the Red Army in these years rather more strongly. The last part usually received answers of good range and often useful precision in relevant references.

Question 18

Part (a) appeared to present difficulties to some candidates who neglected to note that this referred to the 1920s and not the 1930s. Such candidates ought to have got back on the right track by noting that it was the increase in Stalin's power that was needed, whereas by the 1930s that had been achieved. However, some candidates presented material for part (a) that would have been better related to (b). Nevertheless, there were many candidates who focused well on (a)'s requirements and produced effectively supported answers. Those who had mistaken the time sequence in (a) were inevitably hesitant about their approach to (b), but generally speaking this was better done; although excessive statistical data on the Five Year Plans was not required, an indication of their scope and nature would have been welcome in some cases. While inevitably (and correctly) the purges loomed large in the last part, others did indicate the apparent degree of consensus on the value of firm rule.

Question 19

Generally this question was completed poorly by those candidates who attempted it. There was little attention to Khrushchev's rise of power and material on his policies and fall was often sketchy and lacking in precise detail.

Question 23

This question was quite well attempted by candidates who demonstrated good understanding of the historical context surrounding Mustafa Kemal. The strength of answers usually lay in his domestic policies, features of which were brought in again, often with suitable adaptation, to the last part of the question. Candidates were less confident on his rise to power and foreign policies.

Question 24

This was less well supported by factual material than the preceding question. Most candidates knew the basic features of the Suez Crisis but they were unable to develop their responses with well balanced, supportive material covering the period 1954–56. The last part was rather better attempted, with the great powers suitably introduced into the answer and many indicating the crisis as an important 'turning point' in world history.

Question 27

Answers were, in the main, well focused and effectively supported with factual material. In (a) most knew the 'three people's principles', though sometimes as a list rather than specifically related to China at that time. Material on the war lords was perhaps the least substantial of the three sub-questions, though the subject was certainly known and modestly exemplified. On Chiang Kai-shek material was often quite extensive and there was a suitable focus on the variable quality of his leadership. In many respects (c) provided a useful springboard for the last part, where candidates were able to look at the reverse of Chiang's failures and make suitable comment.

Question 28

Most candidates who attempted this question certainly knew in outline the basic features in the rise and fall of Japanese power in the given period. However factual support in the first part was sometimes lacking and the required explanation in the last part could have been more effectively developed with precise detail.

Question 29

Focus and support in part (a) could have been sharper in most cases. The topic clearly began after the defeat of Japan, but some candidates wrote too fully on that, possibly as background. Furthermore detail of the Civil War was not sharply rendered, a feature that has been noted in previous examinations when this topic has been assessed. In (b) there was a tendency to go straight into collectivisation, whereas the question was framed to include the early land seizures that the new government permitted. Of the three sub-questions, (c) was generally most effectively addressed. The last part secured focused responses that dwelt usefully on the context of China in the 1960s.

Question 30

Coverage of the two decades specified was generally well balanced, but the emphasis given could have been put into a sharper context by discussion of the Indian sub-continent at this time. For example, features as Gandhi's campaigns, the British response to them and to the general problems that India posed needed more clear references if the survey of these two decades was to be well founded. Similarly in the last part, while most dealt with Britain's post-war troubles and the continuing disquiet in the sub-continent, few were able to give really convincing practical evidence of these trends.