

HISTORY (MODERN WORLD AFFAIRS)

Paper 2134/01
Modern World Affairs

Key messages

- Candidates are advised to select questions where they can answer both parts of the question.
- Candidates should avoid writing lengthy introductions to part (a) questions.
- Candidates should explain both sides of a balanced answer to part (b) questions.

General comments

Candidates overall seemed to be well prepared for the examination, many demonstrating detailed knowledge on a number of topics. Most candidates seem to have selected questions thoughtfully.

All candidates met the requirement to answer a question from **Section A**: International Relations and Developments. Few selected questions where they could only answer one part of the selected question effectively. A very small number of candidates did not complete their last answer. Some less successful responses wrote lengthy narratives where more time planning evaluative part (b) answers would have improved the response. Candidates should take care when reading questions: some seemed to have misread the League of Nations in the 1920s as the League of Nations in the 1930s (**Question 2b**) and the Operation Overlord was sometimes taken to be about the Operation Barbarossa (**Question 3a**), while **Question 16a** was sometimes read as the opposition in Russia to the Bolsheviks.

Questions are divided into sections labelled **part (a)** and **part (b)**. **Part (a)** questions require candidates to construct historical narratives in answer to a knowledge-based question that require them to demonstrate sound and relevant factual knowledge. Most candidates did this very well, using strong, appropriate, supported information to keep their answers relevant to the question. Some candidates made some attempt to use their knowledge to develop answers, but then needed to keep more to the point or avoid lengthy descriptions that were not appropriate to the question. Other candidates responded to the question about the Great Depression (**Question 12**) with information about all economic issues in America in the 1920s, or started their answer to **Question 2** with details of what all of the Peace Makers wanted out of a peace treaty to end the First World War. These additional details could only be rewarded where they were used to inform a point about either subject. Rarely did candidates select questions about which they had limited knowledge, or offer information not associated in any way with the requirements of the question. Where this happened, it was where they offered information about the activities of the League of Nations in the 1930s (**Question 2b**), where they did not apply knowledge of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles (**Question 1b**), or where the answer about Mussolini's economic policies focused on the invasion of Abyssinia without reference to domestic needs (**Question 7**).

Part (b) questions require candidates to provide evaluative responses as they consider the given factor in a question and assess its importance relative to the given factors or other factors selected from their knowledge of causes, effects, similarities or differences. Successful answers considered both sides of the argument in a balanced way, accepting the given factor and then considering alternatives before reaching a conclusion. The conclusion should be a judgement, supported by the evidence provided.

This series, many candidates offered answers that balanced the factors within an answer effectively, reaching Level 4 and making a Level 5 conclusion accessible. There were a few candidates who achieved 20/20 for some answers.

Most candidates explained the given factor in the context of the question, many offering evaluative comments that partially answered the question. Some candidates tried to address the question by arranging all the factors on the side of the given factor. For example, in **Question 16b**, some candidates saw the economic factors on one side, and the social impact on the other. Others saw some economic factors and

social effects as successes, with balancing economic and social harms on the other side. Few candidates seemed to have difficulties to extract explanations from the narrative of the subject. In **Question 3b**, some candidates seemed to struggle to use knowledge of American policy towards the Second World War before the attack on Pearl Harbour.

An increased number of candidates were rewarded for concluding effectively. For example, **Question 7b** saw a small number of candidates conclude 'that the failings were more important' as they showed the weaknesses in Mussolini's understanding about his country or his people, e.g. the uses of land in ways that damaged agricultural productivity. In **Question 3b**, some candidates looked at the effectiveness of the allies in holding Germany back with and without USA military intervention.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

A significant number of candidates answered three questions from **Section A**, with **Questions 1, 2 and 4** being the most popular.

Question 1

Part (a): Most candidates knew some of the terms of the Locarno Treaties and many were able to set the Treaties into the context of post-war tensions. Some candidates offered vague statements such as 'Britain, France and Germany held talks', not including the detail of who attended and for what purpose, or with what outcome. Many candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the Treaties that handled issues around the western borders of Germany. Few candidates had specific understanding of terms about the eastern borders, or the significance of them, and many seemed to come to unproven conclusions about the Second World War being an outcome. Some candidates attempted this question drawn by part **(b)**, without seeming to have reasonable knowledge to support an answer to part **(a)**.

Part (b): Most candidates could explain what President Wilson wanted from the Treaty of Versailles, and many knew the terms of the Treaty as well as Wilson's 14 Points. The most successful answers saw the 14 Points used to explain Wilson's responses to the points of the Versailles Treaty. Less successful answers wrote about the 14 Points and the Treaty's terms separately, making no attempt to draw conclusions.

Question 2

Part (a): Stronger answers accurately focused on the structures and the bodies that undertook the work and its achievements, whilst other responses only included the problems caused by America's absence. Some candidates offered 'this would have not happened if...' answers that could not be based on evidence, e.g. 'America was strong and could have stopped Italy from taking advantage of its position.' Answers about the 1930s that were unlinked to knowledge given from the 1920s were not awarded marks.

Part (b): The best responses could explain the Vilna Crisis and why it was a failure. Candidates with detailed knowledge of what went wrong for the League and understanding of why these were failures were able to achieve full marks for this question.

Question 3

Part (a): This question attracted candidates with detailed knowledge of the battles of the Second World War. German aims, preparations and the British response were usually offered in detail.

Part (b): Most candidates were able to explain the importance of the attack on Pearl Harbour to the outcome of the Second World War. Many candidates found it difficult to establish counter arguments, but those who did usually managed it by virtue of the success of the Battle of Britain and the strength of Russia in turning back the German offensive. The link through the support lent by the USA to the war effort was less well known.

Question 4

Part (a): Most candidates were able to explain aspects of American foreign policy in Europe 1945 – 49. Popular themes were the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. Stronger answers explained policy towards Poland and the reconstruction of and support for post-war Germany, whilst less successful responses detailed the Potsdam and Yalta conferences without finding policy or links to future decisions.

Part (b): More successful responses discussed the difficulties caused by the actions of the USA and the USSR to their relations before taking a step back and looking for the impact of those actions and apportioning blame to each according to their decisions. Less successful answers detailed the actions, but did not reflect on the importance of them as leading to the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Question 5

There were too few answers to this question for analysis to be helpful.

Section B

Question 6

Part (a): This question caused difficulties for many candidates. There were many general statements such as ‘Germany was very poor’, whilst other candidates took the question too far forward, looking at the Ruhr Crisis and at hyperinflation. There were also some strong answers, e.g. about the number of orphans that were left at the end of the war, and some candidates knew in detail the impact of the end of the war on German industries.

Part (b): There were some very strong answers to this question, where candidates saw in German difficulties both the seeds of international recognition that the terms of the Treaty of Versailles could not be met fully, with the support that this attracted, and the immediate effect on Germany. Weaker answers did not connect the strength of Stresemann or the Dawes Plan to the Ruhr Crisis. Other less successful answers described the Ruhr Crisis with little attention given to the question.

Question 7

Part (a): Many candidates had a clear understanding of the policies relating to women in Mussolini’s Italy. Successful responses included the need for a strong army and its link to increasing the birth rate, changes to expectations on women and work including how these changed during the period, and rewards for large families and policies for education. A small number of candidates mixed up Italian and German policies.

Part (b): The strongest answers considered the strengths of key policies such as the Battle for the Lira, and then revisited those policies looking for shortfalls or detrimental effects on Italy. This was a question where an increasing number of candidates were able to justify a conclusion, either in terms of short term/long term, or by looking at links between economic difficulties and foreign policy decisions.

Question 8

There were too few answers to this question for analysis to be helpful.

Question 9

There were too few answers to this question for analysis to be helpful.

Question 10

There were too few answers to this question for analysis to be helpful.

Section C

Question 11

Part (a): The best answers saw candidates focused on the story of Sacco and Vanzetti, set in the context of employment, discrimination and the economic concerns of the period. Most candidates were well prepared for this question.

Part (b): Candidates were usually aware of the economic concerns in post-war USA and were able to apply this to the question of immigration. Many candidates had difficulties looking for balancing factors, but some found the Southern States and racial tensions, while others found immigrants who were more/less accepted because of their place of origin/skills. Some effective conclusions looked at the word 'most', looking at the number of people or the extent of the USA's population affected by each cause of racial discrimination.

Question 12

Part (a): Candidates who selected this question were usually well prepared for it. Understanding of the causes of the crisis for banks, as opposed to for people, were well described. Details of how banks had responded to the availability of profit from shares and how this determined their response to the public demand for their money as fears grew were well detailed.

Part (b): Most answers to this question were one-sided. The human costs were well explained by most candidates, stronger answers explaining Hoovervilles, unemployment and suicides. Those who could find balance did so usually through the political theme, trade and international relations being popular issues.

Question 13

There were too few answers to this question for analysis to be helpful.

Question 14

There were too few answers to this question for analysis to be helpful.

Question 15

There were too few answers to this question for analysis to be helpful.

Section D

Question 16

Part (a): Strongest answers described the opposition from Communist and monarchist groups within Russia and also opposition from other countries. A few weaker answers saw the October/November Revolutions described, with little connection made to the question.

Part (b): Candidates responded to this question well on the whole, offering answers about targets that were met/not met, and drew conclusions about success based on differences between the industrial picture of Lenin's NEP and the achievements of Stalin's Five-Year Plans. Other themes that were considered were the social changes that had to be made for the Five-Year Plans to be implemented: schools, hospitals and transport. Stronger answers evaluated both the positives and the negatives, reaching varied conclusions. Some justified conclusions were seen to this question.

Question 17

There were too few answers to this question for analysis to be helpful.

Question 18

There were too few answers to this question for analysis to be helpful.

Question 19

There were too few answers to this question for analysis to be helpful.

Question 20

There were too few answers to this question for analysis to be helpful.

Section E

Question 21

There were too few answers to this question for analysis to be helpful.

Question 22

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Question 23

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Question 24

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Question 25

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Question 26

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Question 27

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Question 28

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Question 29

There were too few answers to this question for analysis to be helpful.

Question 30

There were too few answers to this question for analysis to be helpful.

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Developments

Key messages

The most successful responses made direct attempts to address the questions. For instance, when asked why a speech was made at a specific time, the best answers were focused on giving a reason for the speech based on context, message or purpose.

Questions which ask about 'how useful' a source is require answers directly addressing utility. Responses should consider what the source is being used as evidence for and whether it is a reliable account. Candidates can use their specific contextual knowledge, or other sources on the question paper, to good effect by supporting or challenging the information in the source to assess its reliability.

To achieve high marks in **Question 5** it is necessary to find evidence on both sides of the argument in question. Many responses were limited by only considering one side of the issue.

General comments

There was evidence in many responses of sound knowledge and understanding of the Abyssinian Crisis. Many responses showed an understanding of the source material and some used their knowledge to good effect to test the claims made in the sources. Some answered a question using the source(s) as required and then added a supplementary paragraph of contextual knowledge, sometimes repeating this for every question. While this demonstrated accurate and detailed knowledge, it was not relevant to the question and therefore did not gain additional marks. This approach was particularly noticeable in answers to **Question 5**. Several responses offered a paragraph of contextual knowledge, followed by a summary of the sources and a paragraph on reliability before addressing the question. This is a time-consuming strategy which prevented some from completing a creditable response. A minority of responses showed limited understanding of source-based skills such as assessing the utility of a source or the ability to draw valid comparisons between sources.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The most effective answers understood that this cartoon was a comment on the attitude of the League of Nations towards the Abyssinian Crisis. Many argued that the cartoonist was trying to show that the League had deliberately chosen not to see what was going on and would therefore take no effective action to defend Abyssinia. The best responses often concluded that the cartoonist, by portraying the International Court of Justice (ICJ – part of the League of Nations) in this way, was critical of the League and condemned their lack of action. Such answers were often supported by a valid explanation of the references to the labels on the monkeys which read 'See no Abyssinia', 'Hear no Abyssinia', 'Speak no Abyssinia'. Some responses misunderstood the image of the monkeys in the cartoon. These represented judges in the ICJ who are shown as deliberately turning a blind eye to events in Abyssinia. A significant number of responses made invalid inferences, such as claiming that the source was about Britain, France and the US. Such misinterpretations were often repeated in **Question 5**.

Question 2

Candidates were required to assess the utility of Source B as evidence about the Abyssinian Crisis. Successful responses were focused on useful/not useful throughout. It is not enough to claim that the source is useful and then write about the context. Many wrote about the content of the source without addressing its usefulness as a piece of evidence. Others assessed it purely by its provenance, arguing that it was useless because it was from a British Minister and was therefore bound to be biased. Most argued that the source was useful based on the information it contained, for instance, showing the reasons for France being unwilling to antagonise Mussolini. The most effective answers understood that the reliability of the source could be tested to prove its usefulness. The best showed a specific awareness of context, arguing that the source was useful because it offered a reliable account of British opinion in 1935. They generally argued that Britain was keen to take action to stop Mussolini, as claimed by Eden, and used their knowledge of the League ballot which was carried out in 1935 to support their point. Others used the same information to challenge the reliability of the source, arguing instead that an upcoming election in Britain meant that Eden was unlikely to go against the public mood. Many attempted to evaluate the source based on their knowledge of what came later, generally citing the Hoare-Laval Pact as evidence that Eden was unreliable. However, the Pact was agreed after Source B was written and Eden's reliability cannot be assessed against events which had yet to happen. Another equally valid approach to test the reliability of Eden's claims about France was to cross-reference the content of Source B to another source (most frequently Sources C or D) which also showed a lack of determined action against Mussolini by France.

Question 3

The question required candidates to compare Sources C and D to decide whether the cartoonists agreed. Most responses understood that they should compare the content for both agreements and disagreements. Many made valid comparisons based on the way Mussolini was portrayed, or the behaviour of Britain and France in each of the cartoons. Some limited their answers by only considering similarities or differences. The best responses were more carefully focused on the attitude of the cartoonist, as required by the question. Such answers often drew the conclusion that the cartoonists agreed because they disapproved of the way that Britain and France were acting: worrying about their own interests in Source B and only offering 'mild disapproval' in Source C. Weaker responses often lacked valid comparisons between the sources, often picking out a detail or message from one source but mismatching it with information from the other. It is important that comparisons deal with like-for-like information or ideas. For instance, many responses argued that both sources showed that the League was useless when the League was only portrayed in Source C. Some wrote general responses which concluded that the sources were about the same topic, from a similar date or by British cartoonists.

Question 4

The best responses paid close attention to the question and offered reasons why Haile Selassie made this speech at this time. Many referred to the general context, explaining that the speech was made because of the ongoing Abyssinian Crisis. Reference to the specific context made for more effective answers and such responses showed good knowledge of events in 1936, often relating how the speech was motivated by the capture of Addis Ababa in May 1936. Most responses used messages from the source as the reason for it being made. For instance, many argued that it was made in order to show that the League was ineffective and had gone back on its promises to Selassie. Some focused on the purpose of the speech and argued that it was made to try and convince the League to do something about what had happened to Abyssinia, or at least change its approach to possible future acts of aggression. It is important to note that for purpose to be creditworthy, an action or change resulting from hearing the speech needs to be shown. Stating that its purpose was to tell people something is an answer based on message. Weaker answers often analysed the speech, sometimes at great length, without focusing on why Haile Selassie spoke and what he hoped to achieve. The key issue with responses to questions like this is that there must be an element of 'this speech was made at this time because...' in the answer.

Question 5

The strongest answers used evidence from the sources to support and challenge the statement that 'Britain was responsible for the failure of the League of Nations to take effective action against Italy in the Abyssinian Crisis'. Some grouped the sources into 'support' and 'not support' sets. This approach was only effective if sources were considered individually within each section of the response. If sources are grouped and treated as a block, comment on whether they support or challenge the statement in the question can only be credited if the comment can be applied to all the sources. For instance, many responses grouped sources C and D together, claiming that they both challenged the statement because they showed that Britain and

France were ignoring Mussolini. This was valid for Source C but could not be inferred from Source D as they were issuing a warning (albeit a weak one). Most responses took a source by source approach and this was often highly effective. To gain credit, evidence from the source content was required alongside an explanation of how the detail selected linked to the issue of whether Britain was responsible. Generally, answers saw sources C and D as evidence of British responsibility. Source A was often argued as evidence of British responsibility. However, Britain was not shown in the source and this argument was only valid if it was linked to Britain's membership of the League of Nations. Both sources A and E blamed all the members of the League, rather than Britain, but some made the valid point that the 'three powers' referred to by Selassie in Source E included Britain and used this as evidence to support the statement. It was also valid to claim that Selassie was blaming the whole League to challenge the statement and it is important to note that some sources could be used both ways. Some found sources C and D challenging to categorise. While some argued that Britain was held responsible in these sources, many argued that they showed Britain was not alone and was therefore not responsible. This led some to present a one-sided argument. Most answers recognised that Source B offered a clear challenge, laying the blame on France. Some responses attempted to assess the reliability of the sources. For instance, Source B seemed to offer a strong challenge by arguing that France was responsible, however it was also considered an unreliable source because of its British authorship. Comments on the reliability of the sources must serve the needs of the question to be rewarded. A significant minority of responses were seen which offered a 'reliability paragraph', giving stock evaluation on each of the sources, often asserting bias based on provenance. A small number of weaker responses wrote about the sources but made no direct link to the question. The least effective wrote an essay about the issue with no reference to the sources.