

# HISTORY (MODERN WORLD AFFAIRS)

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Paper 2134/01  
Modern World Affairs

## Key messages

- Candidates should 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. Very 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 spent on planning evaluative **part (b)** answers would have served them better. Candidates should take care when reading questions: some misread the Rise of the German Republic as referring to Hitler's rise to power (**Question 6(a)**), and all of Mussolini's policies were commented upon as opposed to the social ones in the question (**Question 7(b)**), while **Question 11(b)** was sometimes interpreted as the effects of the Depression on different social groups.

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 which requires 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 their answers, but neglected to keep to the point or to avoid adding lengthy descriptions that were not relevant to the question. Some less successful candidates responded to the question about the Dawes Plan (**Question 1(a)**) with information about the Treaty of Versailles, or started their answer to **Question 1(b)** with details of what all 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 Wilson's 14 Points (**Question 2(a)**), or where they knew little other than that the Dawes Plan was about money (**Question 1(a)**) or about opposition to the New Deal (**Question 12(b)**).

**Part (b)** questions require candidates to provide evaluative responses as they consider the given factor in a question and to 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.

It was noticeable this year that more 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 an answer.

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 1(b)** some candidates saw the harshness of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany explained in terms of impact, but then as being mitigated

by France's need for protection, and the Treaty of Sèvres/Lausanne as being harsh but fitting the pattern of treaties, but also saw the new treaty explained by the hopes for Turkey under Mustafa Atatürk. Very few candidates struggled to extract explanations from the narrative of the subject. An increased number of candidates were rewarded for concluding effectively. For example, **Question 2(b)** saw a small number of candidates conclude that 'the failings shown by the Corfu Crisis were more important' as they showed the weaknesses established within the system.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Section A**

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

#### **Question 1**

**Part (a):** Most candidates knew some of the terms of the Dawes Plan. Many candidates were able to set the Plan into the context of post-war tensions and financial difficulties. Some candidates offered vague statements such as Britain, France and the USA supported Germany, lacking the detail of who attended and for what purpose, or with what outcome. Many thought that the money was to pay reparations directly. Many candidates were unaware of the Dawes Plan specifically, but detailed terms from it alongside those from the Young Plan. Some candidates attempted this question, drawn by **part (b)**, without reasonable knowledge to support an answer to **part (a)**.

**Part (b):** Most candidates knew and could explain the harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Many knew the points that treaties held in common, for example, reparations and disarmament. The best answers saw reflection around the impact of specific terms, for instance, of the division of Austria-Hungary on the economic future of both new countries, or the impact on families of land boundaries imposed on Germany. The weakest answers reported each of several Treaties' terms separately, making no attempt to draw conclusions.

#### **Question 2**

**Part (a):** The strongest answers were seen where candidates accurately focused on the structures, the bodies that undertook the work and the rules under which they worked. A small number of candidates looked only at the problems the League faced. Some answers offered reasons why the League could not carry out its role.

**Part (b):** Candidates who earned the highest marks were most often those who were able to explain the Corfu Crisis. They explained ways in which it was a failure for the League of Nations, but also ways in which it could be seen as a success for the League, for example, that it did what it was supposed to do, morally condemning the action by Italy and then imposing penalties on the aggressor. Candidates with detailed knowledge of what went well and what went wrong for the League and an understanding of why these were successes or failures were able to achieve full marks for this question.

#### **Question 3**

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

#### **Question 4**

**Part (a):** Most candidates were able to explain the Berlin Blockade in some detail. A few less successful responses detailed the decision made in Potsdam and Yalta before offering a short overview of the Berlin Blockade.

**Part (b):** Some candidates found this to be a straightforward question. They discussed the difficulties caused by the decision and actions of the USA and the USSR before taking a step back and looking for the impact of those decisions and actions and apportioning praise or blame to each. Less successful answers detailed the crisis but did not manage to reflect on the dangers involved.

### 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 very general statements that could only be credited at Level 2 as they did not apply only to the period in question, for example, why the Kaiser's decisions during World War 1 caused him to abdicate. Many candidates took the question too far forward, looking at the opposition to the Weimar Republic. There were some very strong answers, for example, about the requirements for Germany to become a democracy and the organisation of the elections that led to the SPD being confirmed in government.

**Part (b):** There were some very strong answers to this question, where candidates saw German difficulties from the terms of the Treaty of Versailles that could not be met fully, but strengths in being able to combat Communist uprisings. Weaker answers did not evaluate, rather describing the Ruhr Crisis and some developments in Germany, such as theatre and music hall.

#### Question 7

**Part (a):** Most successful answers had a clear understanding of the hopes in Italy of economic gains from the peace settlement after the First World War. So the costs of war in the years after 1918 were specific and the costs of not being treated as a victor detailed. Weaker responses offered vague answers that were not specific to Italy, such as poverty.

**Part (b):** The strongest answers explained their response by considering the strengths of key policies such as the Battle for the Births, and then revisiting 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 expectations and reality.

#### 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 consider changes to what was produced in the USA and to how far production matched demand. Many candidates focused solely on the new industries and the growth of demand.

**Part (b):** Candidates were usually aware of the economic situation across the USA and were able to apply this to the question of economic benefit to a degree. Many candidates had difficulty looking for balancing factors, but some found comparisons between the Southern States and more developed parts of the USA, while others found immigrants and skilled workers, and others still new and old industries.

#### Question 12

**Part (a):** Candidates who selected this question were usually well prepared for it. Many knew in depth the measures that were implemented. Weaker answers showed less discrimination between the early measures of the first 100 days and later achievements.

**Part (b):** Most answers to this question were evaluative of opposition other than that from the Supreme Court and descriptive of Supreme Court decisions. However, there were some very strong answers which reached Level 5 from consideration of the constitutional significance of those decisions.

**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):** The strongest answers described the structures involved in ruling Russia before the February Revolution. Some were well aware of the powers of the Tsar and the role played by the Duma. Weaker answers described decisions made by the Tsar in relation to the First World War.

**Part (b):** Some strong answers offered evaluation of the Provisional Government's policies, particularly in continuing to support the war effort, in relation to popular support, and balanced this with the effect of Lenin's promises of peace, land and bread. A few candidates were unaware of the policies of the Provisional Government.

**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**

There were too few answers to questions in this section for analysis to be helpful.

**Section F**

There were too few answers to questions in this section for analysis to be helpful.

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Paper 2134/02  
International Relations and  
Developments

## Key messages

The most successful responses made a direct attempt to address the question. For instance, where a question asked candidates why a source was published at a particular time, the best responses focused on providing a reason. Information about the message of the source or the context was only valid if they were explained as reasons for publication.

**Questions 3 and 4** required candidates to address the trustworthiness of one source and the utility of another. Relatively few responses used contextual knowledge or cross references to other sources to test the claims made in order to assess the reliability, and therefore the utility or validity, of the information it contained.

Answers to **Question 5** sometimes demonstrated poor technique. Several candidates produced answers which were entirely one-sided. Others wasted valuable time writing about the topic, summarising the sources or writing generally about provenance before getting around to answering the question.

## General comments

Many responses demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding of the events surrounding the Disarmament Conference. Fewer candidates used specific details from their contextual knowledge to assess the claims made, or considered the purpose or motive of an author, to evaluate the sources. It is important to note that sources cannot be tested using knowledge of events which have yet to occur. For instance, many candidates considered that **Source D** (from 1933) was trustworthy because of events which happened later in the 1930s. To be valid, the knowledge used must relate to events which have already happened or were ongoing at the time the source was produced.

Most answers showed sound comprehension of the source material and were focused on the demands of the question. In some cases, answers would have been more effective if they had been better planned and thought through. For example, **Question 2** required candidates to make a comparison. Many wrote unfocused, lengthy responses which contained numerous attempted comparisons which were invalid. A more effective approach would be to spend some time carefully reading the sources and isolating the details or sub-messages which could be compared and supported from both sources. Some answered the question using the source(s) as required and then added a supplementary paragraph of contextual knowledge. While this was often accurate and detailed, it did not gain additional marks. This approach was particularly noticeable in answers to **Question 5**.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Question 1**

This question asked why a cartoon was published. The key issue with responses to questions like this is that there must be an element of 'this source was published at this time because...' in the answer.

Many achieved this by referring to the general context, explaining the source was published because the Disarmament Conference was taking place. Most responses used messages from the source as the reason for publication. For instance, many argued that the cartoon was published to show that the Disarmament Conference was going to fail, supporting their ideas with reference to source details. Some explained that the source was published due to the specific context of 1933. Such responses often argued that the source was

published to show that the Conference would fail because leading powers were missing, such as Japan which was no longer a member of the League. They made good use of their contextual understanding to explain this point. Others focused on reasons related to the actions of Germany following Hitler's appointment as Chancellor. It is important to note that to be valid the context must relate to 1933 or earlier. It was not acceptable to argue that the source was published to show that Hitler was going to remilitarise the Rhineland as this was not yet known. Weaker answers sometimes misinterpreted the source, often arguing that it had been published to show British support for Hitler's rise to power. Others interpreted the source in a sensible way but lacked a reason for publication. A small minority simply wrote about the context without focusing on the source.

## Question 2

Candidates were asked to compare **Sources B** and **C** to decide whether they showed that the USA had changed its mind about disarmament. Most understood that to do this they should compare the content for agreements and/or disagreements. Many responses concluded that the sources showed the US had changed its mind. The most frequently seen argument was that in **Source B** the US refused to give up its right to a fleet of battleships but in **Source C** seemed to have a more positive attitude towards the restriction of armaments. More perceptive responses went further to claim that the US had not entirely changed its mind as there was still 'disappointment' with the progress made in **Source C** which backed up the negative view seen in **Source B**. A few used their knowledge of US foreign policy to evaluate one of the sources. They argued that, following their decision not to join the League of Nations and develop an isolationist foreign policy, the US had no intention of being involved with the League's plans for disarmament and so **Source C** seemed to show a change of mind. It was also possible to consider Swanson's motives in either source to assess his purpose in giving a negative message about disarmament in **Source B** or a positive message in **Source C**. Weaker responses generally lacked valid comparisons between the sources, often claiming that the sources showed a change of mind but picking out a detail or message from one source which was not compared with information from the other.

## Question 3

This question required evaluation of **Source D** to decide if it was trustworthy. Many responses focused on the provenance of the source, arguing that it was by the German Foreign Minister and, as he was at the meeting in question and an expert in German foreign policy, it should be trusted. Others took the source content at face value and argued that the source was trustworthy as what the Minister said was true. More effective responses used their contextual knowledge to challenge or support the claims made in the source to assess whether it was reliable and hence trustworthy. The source was dated October 1933 and it was only possible to test the claims in the source using knowledge of developments in Germany by this time. Several responses argued it was a trustworthy source because Hitler developed aggressive policies, such as the introduction of conscription or the invasion of Poland. As these events had not happened, they could not be used to evaluate the source. More effective answers used their knowledge of Hitler's aims, for instance to undo the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, to show that the Minister was not entirely trustworthy and may have been making excuses to free Germany from the requirement to disarm. Others used their knowledge, or cross references to other sources, to test claims in the source about the 'highly armed states' who had refused to disarm. Few responses considered the purpose of the source to evaluate its trustworthiness.

## Question 4

Candidates were required to assess the utility of **Source E** as evidence about disarmament. Successful responses were focused on useful/not useful throughout. Some answers assessed the utility of the source by its provenance, arguing that it was bound to be useful/useless because it was from Arthur Henderson who had just been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work on the Disarmament Commission. Such answers usually took the line that it was not useful as he was bound to be biased in favour of disarmament. Most argued that it was useful based on the information it contained, for instance showing that Henderson believed disarmament could still be achieved. The most effective answers understood that the reliability of the source could be tested to prove its usefulness. These used either contextual knowledge or other sources to assess whether what Henderson said was reliable and therefore useful. For instance, **Source A** could be used to show that Henderson was being optimistic as it was clear from the cartoon that the Conference would fail. Others used **Source D** to challenge Henderson's comment that Germany might return. Weaker responses often resulted from a lack of focus on the question. It is not enough to make a claim that the source is useful and then write about the context.

### Question 5

The most effective answers used evidence from the sources to support and challenge the statement that 'The Disarmament Conference was a complete failure.' 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. A large proportion of responses took a source by source approach and this was often highly effective. To be credited some evidence from the source content was required, alongside an explanation of how the detail selected linked to the issue of whether the Disarmament Conference failed. Generally, answers saw **Sources A, B** and **D** as evidence of failure, while **Sources C** and **E** offered evidence of at least a degree of success. It was possible to see both sides of the argument in **Source C**. While Swanson accepted that there were some positive developments, he also expressed disappointment that some issues were unresolved. Some responses attempted to assess the reliability of the sources. For instance, **Source E** seemed to offer strong evidence of success but was also considered an unreliable source given its purpose. A significant minority of responses were seen which offered a 'reliability paragraph', giving stock evaluation of each of the sources (such as 'it is from a Senator and therefore must be true') without considering how the purpose or context of a source impacted on its value as evidence. A small number of weaker responses wrote about the sources but made no explanatory link between their commentary on the source and the question. The least effective responses took the form of an essay on the topic with no reference to the sources.