

Specimen Paper Answers

Paper 1

Cambridge International AS & A Level History 9489

For examination in 2021, 2022 and 2023



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Introduction

The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS & A Level History 9489 and to show examples of very good answers.

This booklet contains answers to Specimen Paper 1 – Questions 1(a), 2(b) and 3(b), which have been marked by a Cambridge examiner. Each response is accompanied by a brief commentary explaining its strengths and weaknesses of the answer. These examiner comments indicate where and why marks were awarded and how answers could have been improved.

These answers should be considered in conjunction with Specimen Paper 1 and the Mark Scheme.

The Specimen Paper and Mark Scheme are available to download from School Support Hub.

These files are:

9489 History 2021 Specimen Paper 01

9489 History 2021 Specimen Paper Mark Scheme 01

Past exam resources and other teacher support materials are also available on the School Support Hub

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Assessment overview

Paper 1 Document question

Written paper, 1 hour 15 minutes, 40 marks

Candidates answer one two-part document question on one of the options given.

Candidates must answer both parts of the question they choose.

The balance of assessment of reading and writing skills is equal.

Externally assessed

40% of the AS Level

20% of the A Level

Assessment objectives

AO1

Recall, select and deploy historical knowledge appropriately and effectively.

AO3

Analyse, evaluate and interpret a range of appropriate source material.

Section A: European option

Question 1(a)

Source C

Unhappily I believe in a war with France before long – her vanity, hurt by our victories, will drive her in that direction. Yet since I do not know of any French or German interest requiring a resort to arms, I do not see it as certain. Only a country's most vital interests justify embarking on a war, only its honour, which is not to be confused with prestige. No statesman has a right to begin a war simply because in his opinion it is inevitable in a given period of time. If foreign ministers followed their rulers and military commanders into the field, History would record fewer wars. On the battlefield and in the hospitals I have seen the flower of our youth struck down by wounds and disease. I would not have a moment's peace if I thought I had made war from personal ambition and national vanity. I will never advise His Majesty to wage war unless the most vital interests of the Fatherland require it.

A letter from Bismarck to a Conservative Deputy in the Landtag, March 1867.

Source D

There is nothing in our attitude to annoy or alarm France, there is nothing to prevent the maintenance of peace for ten or fifteen years by which time the French will have become accustomed to German unity and will have ceased to care about it.

I told our generals this spring, when they endeavoured to prove to me by all sorts of arguments that we would beat the French if we went to war at that time, 'I will still do all I can to prevent war. You must remember, gentlemen, a war between such near neighbours and old enemies as France and Prussia, however it may turn out, is only the first of at least six, and what should we have succeeded in doing? Ruining France and most likely ourselves into the bargain. Do you think a poor bankrupt neighbour is as desirable as a solvent one? France buys largely from us and sells us many things we want.' I strove for peace then and I will do so now. But German feelings must be respected or I cannot answer for the people or the King!

From an interview given by Bismarck to a British journalist, September 1867.

(a) Read Sources C and D.

To what extent do these two sources agree about Bismarck's attitude towards France? [15]

Specimen answer

The sources are similar in that any war would be caused by France. In Source C, Bismarck believes that France's "vanity, hurt by our victories, will drive her in that direction". This shows that France would start war because of her own concerns about a united Germany's strength. In Source D it says, "there is nothing in our attitude to annoy or alarm France". Again, this shows that Bismarck's attitude is that France might decide to start a war because of her own concerns but it would not be a situation provoked by him.

Both sources portray Bismarck as wanting to avoid war with France. In Source C Bismarck outlines how important he thinks it is to avoid war, how he has seen the "flower of our youth struck down" and that he would not have a "moment's peace if I thought I had made war

Specimen answer, continued

from personal ambition and national vanity". This is agreed in Source D where Bismarck says, "I will still do all I can to prevent war." In both sources Bismarck's attitude is that it would be France seeking war because of Bismarck's declared intention to avoid war.

However, at the end of Source D the difference is that Bismarck's attitude to France changes to a more aggressive one when he says, "German feelings must be respected or I cannot answer for the people or the King!" This is very different to his attitude in C where he stresses the need for calm and for war to be a last resort when "only a country's most vital interests justify embarking on a war". In Source C, in March he has a pacifist attitude, but by September Bismarck seems more likely to consider war.

The reason for the change in attitude would be because between the writing of Source C in March 1867 and the writing of D in September 1867, the North German Confederation had been set up. This strengthened Bismarck's position meaning that he can be much stronger in his attitude to France, almost warning them that Germany will only be pushed so far. This change explains the similarities and differences in the sources. In March the Confederation existed but it was not formally in existence until the summer and by September elections for a Reichstag had taken place. When in March Bismarck writes to the Deputy he may want to play down his 'Blood and Iron' reputation to reassure him that a stronger union would not lead to war but by September the union exists and he can send a public warning to France through the British journalist. However, Bismarck wants to make sure that in any war France was seen as the aggressor so he needs to look as though he wants to avoid war.

This is another difference in the sources, which would explain why they might show slightly different attitudes to France. C is a letter to a countryman, a man to whom any declaration of war would directly affect and so Bismarck would emphasise his peaceful attitude. In D he is talking to an audience not likely to be involved in a war with Germany or France. Britain had made it clear it had no desire to be involved in continental squabbles. Bismarck is not discussing sending any British sons to war and so this is a good place to send a warning to France as the direct audience would not be so alarmed.

Examiner comments

The answer starts immediately – there is no need for an introduction. The candidate refers to the question throughout to anchor the answer to it.

The first paragraph starts clearly by stating that the sources are similar. In the first sentence, words from the mark scheme are used but a word like 'agree' would do just do as well. The candidate provides quotes from both sources showing how they are similar, with an explanation for each quote linking it to the similarity between the sources. This demonstrates an understanding of the question being asked.

At this point the answer is Level 2. If either the quote or the explanation were missing, the mark would reflect that although the examiner would read the whole answer before deciding on a final mark.

At the end of the first paragraph the candidate asserts again that there is a similarity between the sources.

In the second paragraph, the candidate also identifies similarities between the sources with quotes from both sources. The answer then explains both quotes together.

In the third paragraph, the answer moves to differences between the sources. The candidate makes it clear that a difference is being identified, asserts what the point is and supports it with the source. Quotes and explanations demonstrate understanding of both the question and the sources.

At this point the answer is Level 3. The quality of the similarities and differences identified would be assessed by the examiner to decide where in Level 3 the answer should be placed.

The answer could move to Level 4 but the examiner would read the whole answer before deciding on a final mark.

The answer shows that the candidate has used contextual knowledge. It explains why there are both similarities and differences in the sources using knowledge of the year the sources were written.

In this case, the sources cannot be explained by evaluating the origin because they are both by Bismarck and so the evaluation clearly considers the content rather than the medium. When evaluating sources, candidates can consider the nature and purpose of a source rather than its origin, as in this answer.

It is not necessary for candidates to point out that they are using contextual knowledge but if it helps candidates to structure their answers they may wish to add a phrase such as 'I know from my contextual knowledge that...'.

Marks are given throughout the answer but the examiner would read the whole answer before deciding on a final mark. This is because the final mark is based on the qualities and strengths of the whole answer.

This answer provided all that was asked for by the mark scheme and so it would be awarded Level 4.

Common mistakes

- Explaining the context of the situation and not relating it to the question. Candidates need to remember that they are required to find similarities and differences using the sources. They can use contextual knowledge to evaluate the sources but this is not what is being asked for in these questions.
- Selecting quotes that do not match what the source is actually saying – this can affect whether the answer identifies similarities and differences between the sources correctly.
- Evaluating by using stock responses such as a letter being personal so it must be true or it is from a newspaper so it is reporting facts and must be true or, alternatively, it is from a newspaper so must be biased.

Section B: American option

Question 2(b)

Section B: American option

The origins of the Civil War, 1820–1861

- 2 Read the sources and then answer both parts of the question.

Source A

Everyone knows Douglas, a short, thick-set burly man with a fierce bulldog look. Skilled by a thousand conflicts in all the strategy of a hand-to-hand fight, proud, defiant, arrogant, audacious, unscrupulous, 'Little Dug' ascended the platform and looked out impudently upon the immense throng before him. The other – Lincoln – is in physique the opposite of Douglas. I must admit that 'Long Abe's' appearance is not attractive. But stir him up and the fire of his genius plays on every feature. Listening to him on Saturday, calmly and unprejudiced, I was convinced he has no superior as an election speaker. The Republicans of Illinois have chosen a champion worthy of their heartiest support and fully equipped for conflict with the great 'Squatter Sovereign'.

From a report of the Ottawa debate in the 'Chicago Press and Tribune', 1 September 1858.

Source B

The debate at Freeport was attended by 20 000 people. At two o'clock the debates began. Lincoln led off by replying to the questions put by Douglas at Ottawa. Lincoln then proceeded to bring out Douglas's views by asking him some questions. Mr D replied to Lincoln's questions and retracted what he said in Chicago. Douglas evidently adapts his speeches to the section of the state he is in, taking for granted that his followers in southern Illinois cannot, or will not, read the anti-slavery sentiments he may advocate in the North. Lincoln in his reply utterly demolished Douglas and exposed his double dealing and his cowardice so fully that the friends of Douglas slunk away. No more was heard from his friends while the Republicans held rousing meetings during the remainder of the evening.

From the 'Galesburg Semi-weekly Democrat' (Illinois), 1 September 1858.

Source C

The discussion between Douglas and Lincoln drew an immense crowd of people, numbering we think about 10 000, though some put the figure as high as 15 000. The weather was cloudy and cold and in consequence of a high wind which prevailed a part of the time, many were prevented from hearing the speakers. Lincoln had the opening speech and consumed his time in vain attempts to remove himself from the unpleasant position in which Douglas's arguments had placed him in Ottawa. Taken as a whole, his speech was made up of lame and impotent conclusions and came very short of the expectations of his friends. Of Douglas's speech, suffice it to say it was a masterly effort. We heard more than one Republican acknowledge that, much as they admired Lincoln, he was no match for the 'Little Giant'.

From the 'Freeport Weekly Bulletin' (Illinois), 2 September 1858.

Question 2(b), continued

Source D

When I was a boy of fourteen I had the good fortune to see and hear Lincoln in one of his series of historic debates with Douglas – at Freeport. I was within a few feet of the low platform from which the two speeches were made and both saw and heard everything which went on. The contrast between the two speakers was immense, not in physique and bearing only but in relation to their supporters and the audience as a whole. Lincoln seemed a man of the people. His arguments were as direct in their appeal to Democrats as to Republicans. Douglas, on the other hand, was the aggressive, defiant party leader, determined to intimidate his opponents by a violence of bearing and expressions of contempt. I came away from the meeting quite aflame with enthusiasm for the new Republican Party and especially for Lincoln as its new champion.

From an account written in 1917 by a Professor at Illinois University.

(b) Read all of the sources.

How far do the sources support the view that, in the debates with Douglas in 1858, Lincoln showed all the talents needed to be a leader of the new Republican Party? [25]

Specimen answer

Source A shows support for the statement. The report describes Lincoln as “a champion worthy of their heartiest support and fully equipped for conflict with the great ‘Squatter Sovereign’.” Source A makes it clear here, and in other places, that Lincoln can defeat Douglas in debates, which would mean he is a good leader for the Republican Party and in making reference to the policy of popular sovereignty also makes it clear they think he will be able to defeat one of the main ideas of his opponent, Douglas. Again, this makes Lincoln a good leader because he is seen to be in a strong position to defeat an important policy of the Republican’s opponents.

The strength with which Source A supports the statement suggests the Chicago Press and Tribune was a newspaper with a Republican bias. This means that it would be expected to support Lincoln and this limits it as a piece of evidence because it is partisan and will not give a balanced view of Lincoln’s talents. As a newspaper article, published before a vote, it would be seeking to praise the candidate they favoured in order to persuade voters to support him so it would speak in glowing terms and not point out any failings. This means that it is unlikely to be an objective and useful source for answering the question because its purpose is to persuade not inform.

Source B also shows support for the idea that Lincoln shows the talents to be a leader of the Republican Party. The source describes how Lincoln’s questioning exposed Douglas to be “double dealing” by forcing him to retract something he said in Chicago and says Lincoln “utterly demolished” Douglas. As with Source A, this source shows that Lincoln has the

Specimen answer, continued

debating skills to defeat Douglas which would make him a good leader for the Republican Party.

Source B comes from a publication that would appear to be a natural supporter of Douglas coming from Illinois and from its name but, again like Source A, is so strongly in support of Lincoln it suggests that it is seeking to gain support for him and is not a balanced view of his abilities. The source claims that Douglas has been saying whatever he thinks the part of Illinois he's in wants to hear which suggests that the author is angry about this and has withdrawn his support. This means that this source may have limited use in considering Lincoln's talents as leader but given that both A and B echo one another when, at face value, you would expect them to say opposite things means they might lend each other credibility.

Source C challenges the statement. The source says that Lincoln's speech was "made up of lame and impotent conclusions" and this counters the claims that Lincoln was a good debater which would mean he did not have the talents to be a good leader of the Republicans.

Source C is from another newspaper publication and also shows strong partisan support but this time for Douglas. As with A and B this means that the source is taken from somewhere seeking to persuade readers to support a candidate. This means that the source is not offering a balanced viewpoint about Lincoln's talents. Like A and B, it means the evidence cannot be taken at face value and has limited use in answering the statement.

Source D shows support for the statement, speaking highly of Lincoln's political abilities in debating as his "arguments were as direct in their appeal to Democrats as Republicans. As well as this, Lincoln was a "man of the people". This would make Lincoln a good leader for the Republican Party in his ability to beat opponents whilst also retaining his appeal to voters and not seeming aggressive, as Douglas is described here.

Source D also has limitations as evidence to answer the question because we know so little about the author. It would appear to be the most useful because the professor gives no clue that he went to the debates supporting either side, suggesting he was persuaded at the debate to support Lincoln. If this was the case it would make it a strong piece of evidence to support the idea that Lincoln showed all the talents needed to be a leader of Republican Party as he persuaded this person to be a lifelong supporter as even now, at the age of 73, he speaks in glowing terms of Lincoln. However, this also brings the other issue that Lincoln is viewed as a hero by many because of his later actions, meaning the author may be influenced by hindsight. This works both ways; however, the professor could also be happy to counter the popular view of Lincoln, to appear unique in the appraisal. All of this is guessing, however, we

Specimen answer, continued

have no reason to doubt what the professor thinks is anything other than his honest opinions and as opinions are important in deciding what makes a great leader this evidence must be viewed as the most reliable of the sources. In addition to this, Source D is yet another source suggesting that Lincoln showed all the talents to be a leader of the new Republican Party and that lends it weight too.

The sources mostly offer support for the statement that Lincoln showed all the talents needed to be a leader of the new Republican Party. Although most of the sources are partisan, source B would not be expected to support Lincoln and does add further weight to the idea that the sources offer overall support. The only source that is not a newspaper report, and does not seem to have an agenda, also supports Lincoln. The only source that challenges the statement is a newspaper that clearly supports Douglas and even that is rather vague in its criticism, saying “more than one Republican acknowledge that he was no match for the ‘Little Giant’ actually means that it might only have been two people. This source’s evidence is not strong enough to overturn the overwhelming support of the other three sources to show Lincoln was a talented leader for the Republican Party. Another test for the evidence is the outcome of the debates. Not only was Lincoln seen to be the victor of the debates, looking at who won the popular vote, but also his success drew nationwide attention to him and is seen as one of the factors in leading to his election as President. This means we can trust the weight of evidence in the sources that Lincoln possessed the talents to be a good leader of the Republican Party.

Examiner comments

The answer starts immediately – there is no need for an introduction.

Words from the question are used to firmly tie the answer to the question.

In this answer all the sources are dealt with in order. It would be equally appropriate to group the sources but it is not necessary to do this.

The answer starts by naming the source and whether it supports or challenges the statement in the question. In the answer words ‘support’ and ‘challenge’ have been used throughout because they are the words in the mark scheme but similar words such as ‘agree’ and ‘disagree’ are equally valid.

In the first paragraph a quote is provided followed by an explanation as to how the quote and the source answer the question. The explanation demonstrates understanding of the source and how it relates to the question.

At this point the answer is Level 2.

In the second paragraph an evaluation of the source is provided. Evaluating each source in turn tends to help with meeting the demands of Level 5 in considering to what extent the source supports or challenges the statement. Candidates can wait to provide the evaluation after ‘sorting’ the sources but evaluating all the sources at the end tends to mean candidates are more likely to forget to consider the extent to which each source supports the statement and to weigh the evidence.

At this point the answer is still Level 2 but the evaluation would be noted by the examiner.

In the fourth paragraph, there is a comment about how Source B supports Source A. This is not always appropriate and is not something that candidates should seek to manufacture if the sources do not lend themselves to it. However, if there is a clear connection between the views expressed in more than one source, noting this can help the candidate build a supported judgement.

At this point the answer moves to Level 4 because of the quality of the explanations and evaluation.

It is impossible for candidates to learn the political stance of every publication. This part of the answer allows candidates to demonstrate how their knowledge that publications are often partisan can be used to explain apparent inconsistencies in the sources. At no point in this answer are the words 'bias' or 'biased' used – instead the candidate uses more precise terminology such as 'partisan'.

Often there is nothing in the provenance of a source to allow for evaluation based on its origin. When this happens candidates must use their historical skills to consider factors such as the nature and purpose of the source in their evaluation in order to decide the weight the evidence offers in answering the question.

With the challenge to the statement and the evaluation the answer moves further into Level 4.

Sometimes only one source supports or challenges the statement in the question. The quality of all the explanations helps the examiner decide where the answer fits – Level 3, 4 or 5.

This answer is well-focused and demonstrates a clear understanding of the sources and question by using simple sentences, quotes and explanations relating to the question. The judgement builds throughout and shows effective planning to reach a conclusion. The judgement is supported throughout with reference to the sources and to the question. A quote references one of the sources – this is not essential but it bolsters the point made in the conclusion.

This answer provided all that was asked for by the mark scheme and so it would be awarded Level 5.

Common mistakes

- Not using all the sources or placing all the sources on one side of the statement. There will always be a range of views in the sources – if this cannot be seen at first reading, it means the candidate has not read the sources carefully enough.
- Writing about the historical event with very little reference to the sources. Contextual knowledge can be used to evaluate the sources but essays about the topic do not answer the question.
- Selecting quotes that do not match what the source is actually saying.
- Evaluating by using stock responses such as the source was written a long time after the event so there has been time to gather more evidence about the event, or it was written at the time of the event so all the facts are fresh.

Section C: International option

Question 3(b)

Section C: International option

The League of Nations and international relations in the 1930s

- 3 Read the sources and then answer both parts of the question.

Source A

Senator Swanson, the US Representative, drew the determined opposition of almost the entire Naval Commission of the Disarmament Conference when he defended the right of the USA and Great Britain to maintain their mighty war fleets. He bore the brunt of attacks by other powers seeking abolition of aircraft carriers and battleships. He created the biggest sensation when he made it clear that the USA is prepared to maintain a fleet of big submarines for the defence of its Philippine possessions unless the Conference abolishes submarines altogether. This raises the danger of possible future naval warfare between the USA and Japan.

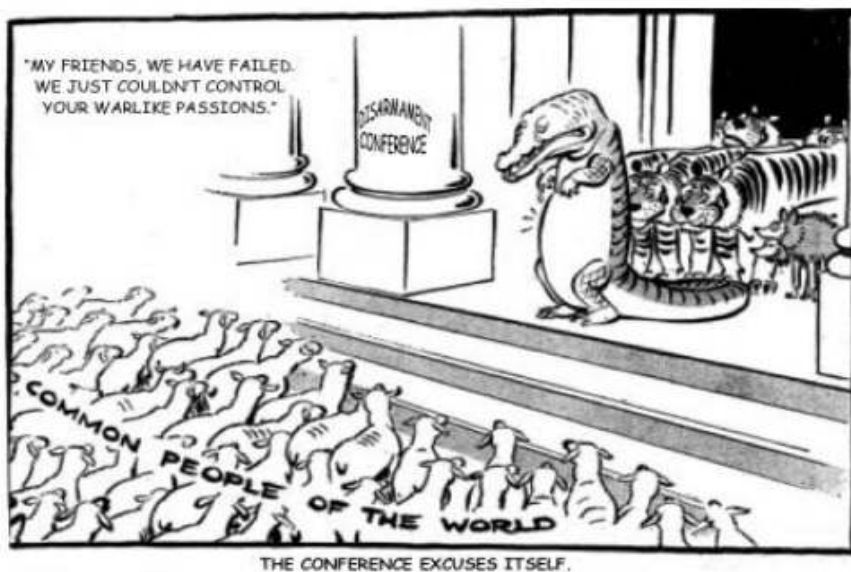
From a US newspaper report of the World Disarmament Conference, May 1932.

Source B

While the Disarmament Conference did not accomplish all that was desired, its substantial achievements give great promise for success when it reconvenes in January. When one considers there were more than fifty nations represented at the Conference, with diverse interests and varied needs for defence, it is pleasing that so much should have been accomplished. It assembled under adverse circumstances, with a conflict between China and Japan and with many political complications in Europe. However, it decided to abolish chemical and bacteriological warfare. It absolutely prohibited air attack on civil populations under any circumstances, and prepared plans for the complete abolition of all bombardment from the air. It has committed itself to this abolition provided means can be devised to make it effective. The Conference agreed to limit the size of tanks and provided for the limitation of land artillery. The Conference pledged itself to a substantial reduction in land, air and sea armaments. An encouraging feature of the Conference was that those who voted against the resolution which summarises the work of the Conference, did so not because the resolution went too far, but because it did not go far enough.

From a press release by Senator Swanson, US Representative at the World Disarmament Conference, August 1932.

Source C



Cartoon published in a British newspaper, May 1934.

Question 3(b), continued

Source D

It may be questioned whether, when the Conference met early in 1932, there existed the conditions required for ultimate success. The progress of the Conference was limited because the settlement of political questions had not been sufficiently prepared in advance and time was spent on a series of fruitless discussions. The Conference faced other difficulties, such as serious events in the Far East and conflicts between Colombia and Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay. Further, when the Conference met, the world was faced with the most serious and widespread economic and financial crisis in history. Economic difficulties were creating political unrest. All these events, creating as they did a general uneasiness, undermined mutual confidence between nations and troubled the atmosphere of the Conference from the very start.

From the official Report of the World Disarmament Conference, 1936.

(b) Read all of the sources.

'The World Disarmament Conference was a failure.' How far do the sources support this view? [25]

Specimen answer

Source A supports the statement that the Disarmament Conference was a failure because the "right of the USA and Great Britain to maintain their mighty war fleets" was defended. The source continues to outline how the USA plans to maintain a "fleet of big submarines" and that this "raises the danger of possible future naval warfare between the USA and Japan".

However, the source can also be read as a challenge to the statement because of the reaction of the other countries. The Senator defending the right of the USA and Britain to keep their fleets "drew the determined opposition of almost the entire Naval Commission" and "bore the brunt of attacks by other powers seeking the abolition of aircraft carriers and battleships". This means that the other countries attending the Conference did want to disarm and that shows the Conference is a success, if the majority of countries attending want to disarm and are prepared to attack the position of a major power like America.

Source A comes from a newspaper report and paints a picture of the Senator being isolated in his defence of maintaining weapons. This echoes the USA's desire to remain isolated from world affairs unless her self-interest is affected. This source suggests that the USA saw the Conference as failure because it interfered with this self-interest meaning that the source is helpful in telling us what the USA thought about the Disarmament Conference but does not give us a wider view meaning it has limited usefulness in helping decide if the Conference was a failure or not.

Source B also shows support and challenge for the statement, as with Source A. It challenges the statement in outlining all that was accomplished, "it decided to abolish chemical and bacteriological warfare. It absolutely prohibited air attack on civil populations agreed to limit

Specimen answer, continued

the size of tanks and provided for the limitation of land artillery". All of these decisions, made by "more than fifty nations ... with varied need for defence", suggest that the Conference made big steps to limiting weapons meaning the World Disarmament Conference was a success.

However, B also supports the idea that the Conference was a failure because some things weren't decided, only "proposed" and "pledged" such as a "substantial reduction in land, air and sea armaments". So, while B shows signs of success in small matters, like the size of tanks, it shows failure in agreement to reduce weapons immediately.

Source B's overall message is that the Conference was a success, coming from a delegate, who would want his work to be seen as successful meaning he will focus on what went well. The arms that were limited are weapons that, it could be said, would not affect America itself, that was not under threat from neighbours, so the Senator is able to stress there were some positive actions taken but at the same time nothing that would affect the USA's self-interest, for example no reduction in the fleets. Source B is useful in outlining what was and was not achieved but it is, again only from the viewpoint of one country that we know did not want to disarm. This, along with A, suggests that the Conference was a failure because a country that didn't want to disarm seemed to think it was a good outcome for them.

Source C supports the statement showing that the cartoonist thinks the Conference was a failure. Predatory animals, the politicians, blame the "Common People of the World" and their "warlike passions" for their failure. The people are represented as a herd of sheep, to follow where they are led and animals not known for their aggression demonstrating how the cartoonist blames the politicians for the failure of the Conference. Just in case the message isn't clear the caption says, "The Conference excuses itself" showing that what they say is just an excuse.

The cartoonist comes from Britain, a country suffering the effects of the Great Depression and still reeling from its experience in the First World War making its people desperate to avoid further war. Britain is one of the countries that was seen to be refusing to disarm in Source A but they would say they needed a large fleet to protect trade with their empire and not for war. This offers an alternative view to that of an American politician. Unlike the politician the cartoonist has no position to protect but can reflect that of their country meaning that this is stronger evidence in suggesting the Conference was a failure as it reflects a wider view point.

The cartoon comes after Germany has abandoned the Conference because countries weren't prepared to disarm to their levels. This means that the cartoon is in possession of more information than A and B because it knows that the self-interest evident in those sources has had a destructive effect on the Conference making it a failure. This means it is more useful as evidence not just because it appears to be reflecting a wider view point but because it comes later when the failure had become more apparent.

Source D supports the statement. The report tells us the Conference was doomed to fail from the start and explains all the "diverse interests" of Source A that made its progress limited. This limited progress can be taken as admission of failure. The issues outlined are the lack of preparation made to settle political questions and the "other difficulties, such as serious events in the Far East and conflicts" in South America, as well as "economic difficulties... creating political unrest". This explains how "mutual confidence" was undermined meaning there was "general uneasiness" and a "troubled" atmosphere from the start.

Source D comes later than the cartoon and knows the Conference has failed. Japan occupies part of China, Abyssinia is occupied by Italy, Germany has rearmed and possibly re-militarized the Rhineland at this point. This means it is a valuable source in telling us whether the Conference failed because it knows it has. It is a report that would be used to determine what went wrong and how the situation could be avoided in the future. The honesty about the failure, even if it is justifying that failure, means it is a valuable source in deciding that the Conference was a failure.

All of the sources support, to some degree, that the World Disarmament Conference was a failure. There is a suggestion, in the other sources, that some countries wanted the Conference to succeed and that some headway was made but powerful self-interest prevented it from being successful. Source A demonstrates this when it tells us about the USA and Britain refusing to reduce their fleet and Source C is clear that politicians' aggression caused the Conference to fail. Source B, that offers the most positive view of the Conference, has an agenda in that Swanson wants to appear successful and supportive of disarmament although we know that whilst that might be the position of the American public it wasn't of the American government, that wanted to protect its overseas interests. Of all the sources this is the one that is least likely to give an accurate picture. The most useful source is Source D in that it has the benefit of being written at the end of the Conference and knows it has failed and because it introduces the economic situation.

The effects of the Great Depression are linked to Japanese, Italian and German aggression and would have prevented disarmament in the 1930s. The sources tell us not only that the Disarmament Conference failed but suggest reasons why it did.

Examiner comments

The answer starts immediately – there is no need for an introduction. Words from the question are used to firmly tie the answer to the question. In this answer all the sources are dealt with in order. It would be equally appropriate to group the sources but it is not necessary to do this. The answer starts by discussing whether Source A supports or challenges the statement in the question. Words like ‘support’ and ‘challenge’ have been used throughout which are the words in the mark scheme but similar words such as ‘agree’ and ‘disagree’ are equally valid.

In the first paragraph a quote is provided followed by an explanation as to how the quote and the source answer the question. The explanation demonstrates understanding of the source and how it relates to the question. At the end of the first paragraph the answer is at Level 2.

At the end of the second paragraph the answer moves to Level 3 because the candidate has noted that Source A both supports and challenges the statement in the question.

In the third paragraph evaluation of Source A follows the explanation. Evaluating each source in turn tends to help with meeting the demands of Level 5 in considering to what extent the source supports or challenges the statement. Candidates can wait to provide the evaluation after ‘sorting’ the sources but evaluating all the sources at the end tends to mean candidates are more likely to forget to consider the extent to which each source supports the statement and to weigh the evidence.

In the fourth paragraph there is a comment about how Source B supports Source A. This is not always appropriate and is not something that candidates should seek to manufacture if the sources do not lend themselves to it. However, if there is a clear connection between the views expressed in more than one source, noting this can help the candidate build a supported judgement.

Sometimes only one source supports or challenges the statement in the question. The quality of all the explanations helps the examiner to decide where the answer fits – Level 3, 4 or 5.

It is impossible for candidates to learn the political stance of every publication. This part of the answer allows candidates to demonstrate how their knowledge that publications are often partisan can be used to explain apparent inconsistencies in the sources.

Often there is nothing in the provenance of a source to allow for evaluation based on its origin. When this happens candidates must use their historical skills to consider factors such as the nature and purpose of the source in their evaluation in order to decide the weight the evidence offers in answering the question.

This answer is well-focused and demonstrates a clear understanding of the sources and question by using simple sentences, quotes and explanations relating to the question. The judgement builds throughout and shows effective planning to reach a conclusion. The judgement is supported throughout with reference to the sources and to the question.

Marks are not noted throughout the essay because the examiners would read the whole answer before deciding on a mark. This answer provided all that was asked for by the mark scheme and so it would be awarded Level 5.

Common mistakes

- Not using all the sources or placing all the sources on one side of the statement. There will always be a range of views in the sources – if this cannot be seen at first reading, it means the candidate has not read the sources carefully enough.
- Writing about the historical event with very little reference to the sources. Contextual knowledge can be used to evaluate the sources but essays about the topic do not answer the question.
- Selecting quotes that do not match what the source is actually saying.
- Evaluating by using stock responses such as the source was written a long time after the event so there has been time to gather more evidence about the event, or it was written at the time of the event so all the facts are fresh.

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