

HISTORY (MODERN WORLD AFFAIRS)

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 showing detailed knowledge on a number of topics.

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 included lengthy narratives where more time planning evaluative Part (b) answers would have served them better. Some candidates misread questions, for example, Anschluss was interpreted as Appeasement (**Question 3**) and the outcome of the Cuban Missile Crisis was confused with the U2 Spy Plane incident (**Question 4**).

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. Successful candidates approached the questions in this way, using strong, appropriate, supported information to keep answers relevant. At times, candidates made some attempt to use their knowledge to develop answers, but neglected to keep to the point or to avoid adding lengthy descriptions that were not appropriate to the question. Some less successful candidates answering the question on the Wall Street Crash (**Question 11**) included information through to 1939; others started their answers on the Great Depression (**Question 12**) in the early 1920s. 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.

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 responses considered both sides of the argument in a balanced way, accepting the given factor and then considering alternatives before reaching a conclusion. Most candidates explained the given factor in the context of the question, many offering evaluative comments that partially answered the question. Other candidates tried to address the question by arranging all the factors on the side of the given factor. For example, in part (b) of **Question 8**, some candidates saw the death of Calvo Sotelo only in its political setting and so found it difficult to find a balanced answer. Less successful answers struggled to extract explanations from the narrative of the subject. . An example of this was in **Question 1**. On part (b), moderately successful candidates began by detailing the wants of the two people from the peace treaties. They then usually went on to explain how one person was happy because of something the Treaty of Versailles stated.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

A significant number of candidates answered three questions from **Section A**.

Question 1

- (a) Many candidates were able to explain what the reparations bill was and why this was a burden on Germany. Some less successful responses offered vague statements, for example, it was a large demand to meet Clemenceau's demands. Most candidates went beyond 1919, many considering the Ruhr Crisis and the damage it did to the German economy. Some linked it to the Stresemann years and the Dawes and Young Plans. A small number made the leap from the reparations demands to the rise of Hitler without making the link appropriately.
- (b) Most candidates knew and could explain the differences in the aims of Clemenceau and Wilson. Candidates that started at this point found it more difficult to get to a balanced answer to the question than candidates who took as their starting point the Treaty of Versailles. Where candidates started with the Treaty, they usually related terms of it to the needs of Clemenceau or the 14 Points of Wilson. Successful answers grouped these very clearly, producing a balanced answer from which a conclusion could be drawn.

Question 2

- (a) The strongest answers on the League of Nations were seen where candidates accurately focused on membership and on events that supported changes to it. Some less successful responses looked at the Locarno Treaties and the impact some of those had on membership. Weaker answers featured simple facts about the situation when the League of Nations was established, or who was not a member. Material about the 1930s, unlinked to knowledge given from the 1920s, could not be rewarded.
- (b) Better answers were most often those that were able to explain the legal position in terms of actions that could be taken, set in the context of the burden of maintaining the peace. The strongest responses set these against the economic and political position of the nations that carried this burden, and the obstacles to their success. They were usually knowledgeable on the impact of the USA not having a role in the League of Nations – such as making sanctions ineffective or not giving military strength to the West, for example, during the Japanese invasion of Manchuria.

Question 3

- (a) The clear detailing of events helped some candidates to produce very good responses.
- (b) From D-Day to the entry into Berlin, from the early failings of Barbarossa through to Berlin, good responses were very knowledgeable about this topic, tracking relative impact on German strength. Some less successful answers earned marks by evaluating one factor and concluding, for example, that the other factor only achieved being a distraction to German troops focused on the Eastern Front.

Question 4

- (a) The strongest answers established the origin of the term 'Iron Curtain'. The needs of the Soviet Union for a buffer zone and for resources, following a devastating war, were well used to explain the Soviet Union's path through Eastern Europe. Some candidates spent time unnecessarily on setting the scene through the Potsdam and Yalta conferences.
- (b) Some candidates were able to access reasonable marks by explaining the Hot Line as necessary to keep the world from the edge of destruction, its development being tied to details of the movement of missiles during the Cuban Missile Crisis and decisions that each leader made. This was balanced against the arms race and the development of space technology in strong responses.

Question 5

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

Section B

Question 6

- (a) Very clear answers considered the timeline from Spartacists through to Kapp Putsch, examining why the challenge was made and what was done. The best answers kept to the dates in the question and answered in detail. Weaker answers went beyond the bounds of the question, usually without dates, but looking to the rise of Hitler and the threat from the Nazis.
- (b) An unwillingness to challenge the question led less successful candidates to introduce their answer with the importance of German hatred of the Treaty of Versailles and how this boosted Nazi chances at the ballot box, causing politicians to entertain the idea of having Hitler in the Reichstag. Stronger answers provided three factors in response to the quotation in the question, gaining high marks before writing about media management and the use of armed strength during elections. 'Power' was addressed by the strongest answers which reflected on whether power was achieved before the passing of the Enabling Law or not. Weaker responses included in Hitler's attractions the actions taken after power was achieved.

Question 7

- (a) Some candidates were well aware of how Italy had been treated during the First World War and the peace treaties that followed. Expectations versus gains were well explained.
- (b) The strongest answers explained the relationship between Mussolini and the King and the costs of achieving the Corporate State in terms of benefits to workers and their families. These answers were then balanced by consideration of the role played by the media and the single party state. Some candidates were unable to offer a balanced answer, limiting the marks available.

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

- (a) Most candidates who answered this question explained how speculation by citizens led to panic selling on rumours of a weakening dollar and had an impact on banks. The best answers explained how banks also had speculated and showed the impact this had on their abilities to meet the demand for cash. It was these answers which showed how bank closures threatened the American economy.
- (b) Candidates usually offered a balanced answer to this question. The difficulties faced by farmers were well understood by many candidates. Stronger candidates looked at spending power in the north of America against that in the south, and the southerners' inability to use electrical equipment through lack of electricity.

Question 12

- (a) A number of candidates would have benefited from greater knowledge of the Depression. Less successful answers started in 1920 and followed through, looking worldwide at the impact of the Depression. Stronger answers came from candidates who considered each part of American society and considered how they fared during those years of Depression.
- (b) Generally, candidates were stronger on Roosevelt and Hoover than they were on part (a).

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

- (a) The best answers offered detailed knowledge which informed developed statements on the NEP and its role.
- (b) Better responses were able to provide a balance in engaging with both the 'economic gain' and the 'great social cost' referred to in the 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

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

Question 23

- (a) Candidates who selected this question knew their subject well and answered with understanding about the relations between Jewish settlers and Arabs, specifically in the 1920s.
- (b) Balanced answers to this question were the norm. Candidates were able to consider to some degree the reasons for the British leaving Palestine in 1948, balancing the effect of the Arab Rebellion with Britain's post-war difficulties and a lack of knowledge about what other actions could be taken independently.

Question 24

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

Question 25

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

Section F

Question 26

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

Question 27

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

Question 28

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

Question 29

- (a) This question attracted candidates who were knowledgeable about the subject. Candidates who selected this question were able to detail the work and impact of Allama Iqbal.
- (b) There were a few very strong answers that found positives in the impact of Gandhi's non-violence movement. The negative pressures on British rule organised by the Muslim League were given more importance by most candidates.

Question 30

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



HISTORY (MODERN WORLD AFFAIRS)

Paper 2134/02
International Relations and
Developments

Key messages

Using the stem of the question in their answers helped a number of candidates to direct their responses to the demands of the questions.

General comments

Overall there was evidence of good knowledge and understanding of the topic. The analysis of the cartoons was generally good. Some less successful candidates relied too much on contextual knowledge, while making little reference to the sources on the paper.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Some sound answers were seen but less successful responses began with an explanation of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. This appeared to hinder candidates in their attempts to make inferences based on the source provided. These answers concentrated on the results of the Soviet Pact and the invasion of Poland, rather than on what could be learnt from the cartoon. A few answers digressed into reliability and use.

Question 2

This answer required a comparison of the content of two sources, with support from contextual knowledge. The best answers were able to explain that there was evidence to show both that Hitler did, and did not, change his mind. Many knew about Hitler's real intentions but more candidates could have linked to the precise context of the intervening months. Better answers which made use of the content of the sources, as required by the question.

Question 3

Most candidates did address the issue of trust. The best answers used their contextual knowledge appropriately. Answers which showed an understanding of Molotov's relationship with the Communist Party and the Supreme Soviet tended to be good. Other responses would have been improved by a greater focus on the question. There was some unsupported argument and an assumption that authors/speakers are always dishonest in some weaker responses.

Question 4

Successful responses were based on a careful examination of what was being carried on the train. Less successful responses stated that it was carrying supplies to fight in the Second World War, when the trucks were in fact carrying portraits of Stalin. Many answers would have benefited from being able explain the message or purpose of the cartoonist. Some candidates thought it was a warning to the Russians, but this was printed in Britain and the intended audience was the British public.

Question 5

The strongest answers tended to go through each source individually, using specific phrases from them to support and not support the hypothesis that Germany had always intended to go to war with Russia. Other responses tended to bunch sources together, rather than going through them individually. Good answers

Cambridge Ordinary Level
2134 History (Modern World Affairs) June 2017
Principal Examiner Report for Teachers

questioned the reliability of the sources, rather than relying on assertion. The best evaluation tended to come from questioning the purpose of the author. There were some good responses that made appropriate use of contextual knowledge of Hitler's plans and an understanding of the Russian perspective. Some developed evaluation occurred when candidates related the source to their knowledge of the events.