

# 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. Few selected questions where they could only answer one part of the selected question effectively. A 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 served them better. Candidates should take care when reading questions, e.g. some missed the 1922 end date for **Question 7b**.

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 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 an 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 responded to the question about food production in Italy under Mussolini (**Question 7a**) with information about all developments in Italy, or described Hitler's political rise in the 1930s (**Question 6a**) rather than the Munich Putsch. 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 Treaty of Trianon (**Question 2a**), where they offered Operation Sea Lion (**Question 3a**), or where they described the work of Martin Luther King (**Question 14a**).

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.

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 1b**, best answers saw candidates evaluating all the ways in which lack of involvement in negotiations disadvantaged Germany before considering the other parts of the Treaty of Versailles. A few candidates struggled to extract explanations from the narrative of the subject. An example of this was in **Question 2**. On part **(b)**, moderately successful candidates began by considering weaknesses of the League of Nations in the 1920s then often described the place of the USA in its establishment. An increased number of candidates were rewarded for concluding effectively. For example, **Question 7b** saw a small number of candidates conclude 'that the failings of governments in the years 1918–1922 were more significant as the nation had not expected to lose land after World War One as it was supporting the victors when war ended and blamed governments for this lack of dignity. **Question 11b** saw some candidates looking at the relative importance of social versus economic effects when considering the impact of prohibition on America.

## **Comments on specific questions**

### **Section A**

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

#### **Question 1**

Part **(a)**: Most candidates knew the terms of the Treaty of St Germain. Many candidates were able to select aspects of the treaty and the ways in which these weakened Austria. Some candidates offered vague statements that detracted from their mark, e.g. Austria lost lands.

Part **(b)**: Most candidates knew and could explain the Treaty of Versailles. Many knew the impact of key terms of the Treaty. Best answers looked at several ways that the lack of involvement in negotiations affected Germany; from the belief that the war was not over and the horror of being treated as a defeated country, through the published 14 Points and how different the Treaty of Versailles was to them, to the indignity in demand that the War Guilt Clause had to be signed before war was officially over. Where there was a justified conclusion, it was about the expectations in Germany in 1918, and how and why Germany then found the Treaty of Versailles challenging.

#### **Question 2**

Part **(a)**: Most candidates started with the Greek-Albanian border issue and the involvement of Italy as part of the League of Nations. Best answers knew the detail in the demands of Italy when Tellini was killed, through the Greek reaction to the invasion of Corfu. Most candidates knew the end of the story.

Part **(b)**: Most answers could explain why the League of Nations was weak in the 1920s, many giving examples to support the reasons given. Best answers had no difficulty in finding balance in the importance of the non-involvement of America. They saw the 14 Points recommending the League of Nations and questioned how other countries would view the resulting body without its founding member's participation. Some went on to show understanding of why sanctions do not work when such a large and prosperous trading nation sits outside the area of sanctions.

#### **Question 3**

Part **(a)**: Many candidates knew about the two air forces and their skills and equipment strengths and weaknesses. Some were aware of the targets of the Luftwaffe on British soil and the successes and failures of the attacks. A few candidates showed awareness of the significance of radar to British success. A small number of candidates described the plans for Operation Sea Lion.

Part **(b)**: Most answers were superficial, asserting poor planning about a range of military needs such as medical provisions without considering the effects on Operation Barbarossa, or of facing a winter of cold without understanding of what it meant to the German soldiers in Russia. Those who had been taught the subject were aware of the planned prongs of the attack, the outcome of each and the causes of difficulties faced.

#### **Question 4**

Part **(a)**: While this was not a popular question, most candidates who offered answers did not mix Potsdam up with Yalta. They were clear about decisions that were reinforced at Potsdam and those that were freshly engaged with there.

Part **(b)**: Some candidates found this to be a straightforward question, discussing the fates of Poland and other Eastern European countries. Strong answers took the Berlin Blockade as the key failure, explaining multiple factors.

#### **Question 5**

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

## **Section B**

### **Question 6**

Part (a): All candidates who attempted this question knew about the imprisonment and the length of stay Hitler had to spend in prison. What went before was usually much less clear.

Part (b): Less successful candidates made unsupported claims about the role of women, about the club scene and about religion under the heading of culture. Best answers were aware of some of the films that were made and of the importance internationally of some named singers and artists. Best answers were aware of the importance to architecture of the Bauhaus movement. Stronger answers considered three or four factors from the Stresemann years in depth. Some candidates answered from 1933 onwards, not making any links at all to the question.

### **Question 7**

Part (a): This was a well answered question. Many candidates had a clear understanding of the Battles that Mussolini imposed and of what they demanded.

Part (b): The strongest answers explained several reasons why Italian people were dissatisfied with their governments since the end of the First World War. From losses during the Peace negotiations to the social positions in Italy, all were explained as reasons for the need for change. Some candidates were aware of the nature of government in post-war Italy and could explain difficulties in governing from that aspect. Balancing this with how Mussolini showed strength was straightforward for many candidates. However, some went outside the scope of the essay and justified importance from the impact of policies deep into Mussolini's period of rule. This was a question where a small number of candidates were able to justify a conclusion, either in terms of the honour of Italy, or by looking at how Mussolini won the support of business people, the religious and the King.

### **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 Republican policies, whose support they attracted and why.

Part (b): Candidates usually offered a balanced answer to this question, and were able to explain social gains in cities versus a range of economic losses nationally. Some effective conclusions looked at the unexpected nature of the difficulties in terms of law and order that the policy brought about.

### **Question 12**

Part (a): Candidates who selected this question had been well prepared for it. They stated its aims and described what they meant and for whom.

Part (b): Most answers to this question were focused ones. NIRA was well understood, candidates explaining what it said, why it was necessary and what it achieved. This was one of the questions where a balanced answer was well achieved, candidates explaining the need for and impact of a variety of other policies that were of great significance. One justified conclusion considered how different pieces of legislation supported each other to bring back confidence.

**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 best answers saw candidates able to offer detailed knowledge of planning, from the national level, through regional, to local and individual business. The range of industries covered by Gosplan was usually well known. One answer only considered collective farms.

Part (b): Candidates answered this question well on the whole, offering answers about the impact of the purges on a variety of spheres of life in the USSR and, in the strongest answers, how it comparatively affected the USSR's development and role in the world. Some attempted a conclusion considering how Stalin himself and the USSR lost and gained from the purges.

**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**

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

**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**

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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Paper 2134/02  
International Relations and  
Developments

## Key messages

Questions which ask about 'how useful' a source is require answers that directly address the utility of the source. 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 to good effect by supporting or challenging the information in the source to assess its reliability.

The most successful responses made a direct attempt to address the question. For instance, where a question asked what the message of the cartoonist was, the best answers were focused on what the cartoonist was trying to convey.

A considerable number of responses showed evidence of poor time management. For instance, candidates often spent too long on **Questions 2** and **3** at the expense of **Questions 4** and **5**. It is important to answer the question directly, rather than spending time on lengthy contextual introductions. Evidence of hurried reading was also seen in **Question 5** where some candidates misread the question as being about 'claims' rather than 'clear aims.'

## General comments

There was evidence in many responses of sound knowledge and understanding of American involvement in the Vietnam War. 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 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** where some responses offered a paragraph of contextual knowledge, a summary of the sources and a paragraph on reliability before showing whether the sources supported or challenged the statement in question. This was a time-consuming strategy which prevented some candidates from completing a creditable response. A minority of answers showed limited understanding of source-based skills such as assessing the utility of a source, how to compare the claims in sources or consider the reliability of evidence.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Question 1**

Many responses found it challenging to interpret the cartoon on American involvement in Vietnam. The most effective answers understood that the cartoon implied that the US did not know what it was doing in Vietnam and supported this with evidence that the soldier had lost his way. Others drew the inference that the US was doomed to failure and supported this idea with an understanding of source details, such as the laughing skeleton of a French soldier implying that the same fate awaited the Americans. Many mistook the French figure as being Vietnamese and this undermined their attempts to draw valid inferences from the source. Some made invalid inferences such as the source showing the Americans were involved in Vietnam. This could not be allowed as this was stated in the question. A few responses used their contextual knowledge to read things into the source, for instance about communism, which the source did not address. While most responses showed an awareness that inferences should be supported with detail from the source, some made inferences without support. A small minority of responses either misinterpreted the source (such as the US was going to achieve a great victory) or made no reference to the source at all and wrote about the context instead.

## Question 2

Candidates were required to assess the utility of Source B as evidence of Johnson's reasons for involvement in Vietnam. Successful responses were focused on useful/not useful throughout. It is not enough to make a claim that the source is useful and then write about the context. Some simply wrote about what the source said without addressing its usefulness as a piece of evidence. Others assessed it purely by its provenance, arguing that it was bound to be useful as it was from Johnson, without considering the content of the source. Most argued that it was useful based on the information it contained, for instance showing Johnson's motives of wanting to halt the spread of communism and his concern to protect his own reputation and that of the United States. The most effective answers understood that the reliability of the source could be tested to prove its usefulness. Some considered the purpose of the source to assess reliability, generally concluding that, although speaking in private to his biographer, Johnson was keenly aware of his reputation. By 1970 it was obvious his policy in Vietnam had failed and was unpopular with public demonstrations of anger against him in the US. Candidates who took this approach often considered Johnson's words to be unreliable as he was careful to show his actions as honourable and that he gave up his social programmes in the US with great reluctance. Others took an equally valid approach and tested reliability by cross-referencing the content of Source B to another source (most frequently Source C) or to specific contextual knowledge. Weaker responses often misunderstood the references to the Great Society and assumed that Johnson wanted to 'feed the hungry' in Vietnam. Several responses made valid use of the content but then repeated their points at great length. Although they gained credit for the valid source use, the repetition served only to cost them time for later questions.

## Question 3

The question required candidates to compare Sources C and D to decide whether Johnson was lying in C. Most understood that in order to do this they should compare the content for agreements and disagreements. In common with responses to **Question 2**, some attempted to find numerous agreements/disagreements, often making valid points and then repeating them or making further comparisons where the details did not match. It is important that comparisons deal with like-for-like information or ideas. For instance, many responses argued that both sources showed that the US was trying to defend freedom and offered supporting detail to show the agreement suggested that Johnson was not lying. Others argued that Johnson probably was lying because in Source C he talks about keeping promises and being honourable whereas Source D described this as being more about 'American vanity'. The best responses made a comparison between the content of the sources and then evaluated one or both sources in terms of their purpose to assess the truthfulness of Source C. Generally, candidates focused on the purpose of Source C, suggesting that Johnson was trying to win over the American public to his policy of greater involvement in Vietnam and this undermined the truthfulness of the source. Weaker responses generally lacked valid comparisons between the sources, often picking out a detail or message from one source but mismatching it with information from the other. Some wrote general responses which concluded that the sources were about the same topic or from a similar date.

## Question 4

The best responses paid close attention to the question and focused on the message of the cartoonist. Such answers generally used the source to show how the cartoonist wanted to express his disapproval or criticism of the way the US presidents were conducting the Vietnam War. Almost all responses offered valid sub-messages on the source, often commenting on how the US Presidents followed each other blindly which showed they had no clear policy towards Vietnam. Many understood that the policy the presidents pursued in the Vietnam War was doomed to failure and supported their answer with details from the source. Several responses focused on the finer details of the source, for instance commenting on Kennedy's hair or the fact that Johnson is not wearing shoes, and lost sight of the overall message of the cartoonist. A number misinterpreted the cartoon and took it as evidence that the US presidents were being helpful towards each other.

## Question 5

The strongest answers used evidence from the sources to support and challenge the statement that 'The USA had clear aims in Vietnam'. 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 Source A and B together, claiming that they both supported the statement because the USA was determined to destroy communism. This was valid for Source B but could not be inferred from

Source A and therefore could not be rewarded. 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 US had clear aims. Generally, answers saw Sources B and C as evidence of clear aims, while Sources A and E offered evidence of a lack of clear aims. It was possible to see both sides of the argument in Source D. While Fulbright accepted that the US was trying to defend freedom (a clear aim) he also suggested that they were 'dazzled' and lacking in judgement which suggested less than clear aims. Some responses attempted to assess the reliability of the sources. For instance, Source B seemed to offer the strong evidence of clear aims but was also considered an unreliable source. 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, such as it is from a Senator and therefore must be true, without considering how the purpose or tone of a source impacted on its value as evidence in response to the question. A small number of weaker responses wrote about the sources but made no direct link between their commentary on the source and the question. The least effective answers offered an essay in response to the question with no reference to the sources.

