

GCSE (9–1)

Candidate Style Answers

HISTORY A (EXPLAINING THE MODERN WORLD)

J410

For first teaching in 2016

J410/02 International Relations: the changing international order 1918-c.1975 with Germany 1925-55: The People and the State

Version 2



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Introduction

This resource has been produced by a senior member of the GCSE History examining team to offer teachers an insight into how the assessment objectives are applied. It illustrates how the sample assessment questions might be answered and provides some commentary on what factors contribute to overall levels.

As these responses have not been through full moderation, they have not been graded and are instead, banded to give an indication of the level of each response.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

Question 1

Outline the actions of the USSR in Eastern Europe from 1945 to 1948.

[5 marks]

High banded response

As WW2 came to an end, Soviet forces pushed back the German army to Berlin. Stalin tried to make sure that he kept control of Eastern Europe by pressuring the Allies at Yalta and Potsdam to allow him to control the areas that the Red Army was in. After the war ended, he continued to build Soviet influence in Eastern Europe, with the aim of making strong satellite states as a buffer zone against capitalism. This included creating Cominform in 1947, which linked the Communist parties of Europe to work together against US aggression. In 1948, Stalin wanted to demonstrate his power and also his determination to prevent US involvement in the East, so he blockaded Berlin to stop US influencing this. Even though the blockade failed, it showed the world that the USSR intended to keep control.

Examiner commentary

This answer shows specific knowledge of a range of events, not just one. The candidate has dates and key language. Also important, it is organised in the form of a narrative which shows that they understand how the events fitted together.

Medium banded response

When WW2 ended, the USSR had soldiers in Eastern Europe in countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia. There were some conferences, and the USSR kept insisting that they had a sphere of influence. After the war, they left their armies in these countries to keep Soviet control, even though other countries didn't want this. They wanted to keep strong control in Europe. One way that they did this was by creating Cominform which made their control of Eastern Europe stronger. Also they made Comecon to help keep Eastern Europe strong as a Soviet Sphere of Influence.

Examiner commentary

This answer shows some general knowledge and awareness. It is not as clear as candidate A in that it does not link the knowledge quite as clearly or explain the points, for example how Cominform increase Soviet power. Also, there is a crucial error – the candidate has missed the dates in the question and talked about Comecon which was 1949, so not in the question years.

Question 2

How successful were attempts at international cooperation in the 1920s? Explain your answer.

[10 marks]

High banded response

In the 1920s, there were lots of examples where international cooperation was successful. However, there were other examples where it did not work.

After the Treaty of Versailles, the League of Nations was set up to resolve issues and generally it was successful. This included solving international disagreements. For example, when Finland and Sweden contested the Aaland Islands in 1921, the League intervened. The court decided that Finland should keep the islands but not be allowed weapons there, and both countries decided to accept the result. In the main, countries cooperated because they did not want another war. The League also had other successes. For example, with international cooperation, they managed to free 200,000 slaves from Sierra Leone. They also worked to return hundreds of thousands of refugees who had been displaced by World War One.

There were other examples where countries cooperated. In 1924, America offered financial support to Germany which resolved the issues in the Ruhr between Germany and France. In 1925, Germany agreed the Locarno Treaty, which signed to accept the borders of the Treaty of Versailles and led to them being accepted into the League. Also in 1928, 15 countries signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact which agreed to not use war as a solution to international problems. More countries signed it later.

However, not every issue was properly solved. In 1923 Greece and Italy conflicted over Corfu. After an Italian general was murdered in Greece, Italy invaded Corfu. Even though the League decided that Italy was in the wrong, they chose to give in to pressure of Mussolini. This showed that the League was not strong enough to stand up to aggressive countries and predicted the problems of the 1930s.

Overall, international cooperation in the 1920s was very successful. This was because there were so many agreements that were made and League rules that were accepted, and even where decisions failed, like with Corfu, countries were so desperate to avoid another war that they did not challenge the decisions.

Examiner commentary

This candidate has a two sided answer. They have used specific examples to back up the two sides. They have not made generalisations. For example, with the issue of slavery, instead of saying that the League sorted slavery, it has a statistic and a location.

At the end, the judgement makes a focused answer to the question and has a reason for the decision.

Medium banded response

There are loads of examples of how countries managed to cooperate in the 1920s. One way was via the League of Nations. The League solved many crises by judging between the countries involved and the countries accepted the decision. One example was over Silesia in 1921, where Germany and Poland agreed to divide the area to avoid a war. There were other examples, like the Aaland islands which also ended well. The League also sorted other problems out. The Health committee helped with treatments for serious diseases like malaria. They also freed many slaves in places like Sierra Leone. They also organised the mandates for land that changed hands after the Treaty of Versailles.

So overall, there is plenty evidence that international cooperation was working well in the 1920s.

Examiner commentary

This answer shows good evidence of specific knowledge. The examples are precise and not vague or generalised. It is limited, however, because the candidate has only covered one side of the question. To reach a higher level, they need to show a more balanced viewpoint which incorporates two sides.

Question 3

Study interpretation A. Do you think this interpretation is a fair comment on the policies of Neville Chamberlain in the period 1937-1939? Use your knowledge and other interpretations of the events of 1937-1939 to support your answer. **[25 marks]**

High banded response

The source says that Chamberlain showed “moral courage.” There is evidence that he genuinely believed in appeasement. For example, after the Munich Conference of 1938, Chamberlain flew back to Britain and publicised the paper that promised “peace in our time.” He genuinely believed that Germany and Britain could avoid war.

The source also says that he made “miscalculations and misjudgements.” There is evidence for this. For example, he interpreted the earlier actions of Hitler, like Anschluss and the Rhineland, as being limited aims which Hitler could be satisfied with. Similarly, he trusted that Hitler could be content with the Sudetenland, and that six months later, when Hitler took all of Czechoslovakia, that this was the limit of Hitler’s aims. After, he invaded Poland. Chamberlain had misjudged the extent of Hitler’s plans for Lebensraum.

Other historians agreed with Churchill once war broke out. In WW2, historians blamed Chamberlain, calling him and his advisors the “Guilty Men.” Later on, in the Cold War, historians and politicians in Britain and USA said that appeasement had led to Germany being more aggressive, and this was an excuse for being aggressive against the USSR, instead of negotiating.

However, some historians have argued that Chamberlain did not make a mistake. Records that were only opened in the 1990s show that Chamberlain began rearming in 1936 as chancellor of the exchequer, so he obviously did not entirely trust Hitler. Also historians have shown that Britain was not in a position to fight Germany before 1939. For example, the first five radar towers were only constructed to defend Britain in 1936, and they were finished in 1940. If Britain had fought earlier, they might have been defeated in the Battle of Britain.

As well as evidence that Chamberlain may not have been wrong, the source was written by Churchill. He had been warning Britain for years and treated as a radical politician who was a warmonger.

Overall, it is fair to consider that Chamberlain was genuine but made mistakes. However, Churchill’s opinions blinded him to the fact that Chamberlain was not naïve and in fact bought time for Britain, so overall I do not agree fully with Churchill’s view.

Examiner commentary

This candidate has shown a high quality of subject knowledge. The examiner can see that they have revised. First, this answer identifies ways that the source is right, and then ways that it is wrong. It also shows an awareness of the historiography, in other words different interpretations of the debate. At the end, the answer makes a clear judgement about the question.

Medium banded response

In some ways, the source is a fair viewpoint. It says that Chamberlain made some miscalculations. One way this is true is when he met Hitler at Munich, and then came to England telling people that he had got a peace agreement with Hitler. But only a few months later, Hitler carried on and took Czechoslovakia and the Poland and Britain ended up fighting Germany anyway. So this was an example of a miscalculation.

However, it is not entirely fair. It was written by Winston Churchill. He had been critical of Chamberlain for years, and no one had taken him seriously. Some accused him of wanting a war. So maybe this source is his opportunity to show how he was right all along. It is probably doing that to emphasise his role as the successful leader of Britain in WW2 by comparing himself to mistakes made by Chamberlain.

Examiner commentary

This candidate has used some accurate knowledge to consider the viewpoint. They have considered support for the viewpoint and also one counter-interpretation, in the form of Churchill's subjective viewpoint.

To improve the answer, they could have made the examples more precise and also given more range of examples. In particular, the alternative interpretations could be more developed as there are other key defences of Chamberlain's decisions that are not mentioned. This would therefore be placed at the lower end of a medium mark band.

Question 4

Study interpretation B. Explain why not all historians and commentators have agreed with this interpretation. Use other interpretations and your knowledge to support your answer.

[20 marks]

High banded response

In Source B, Gaddis suggests that the Cold War should be blamed on the two sides not seeing eye to eye, because they both wanted security but could not agree on how to get it. He states that it started because America and the West wanted to ensure fair security for all, not for a few by making others struggle, whereas USSR only wanted security by “eliminating potential challengers”, in other words saying that USSR was acting in an aggressive way. However, Gaddis also implies that it was more the fault of USSR than USA. It makes a direct link to Stalin’s personal attitude as a cause of Soviet aggression.

In the 1940s and 50s, American historians would not have agreed with this because it left some of the blame on USA, even though it mainly blamed USSR. These historians used examples like the Berlin Blockade in 1948 and the way that Stalin blocked Marshall Aid which would have helped poor Eastern European countries after the war to show aggressive actions by USSR against the nice actions of USA. They would not have agreed that USA misunderstood the different aims of the USSR.

In the same period, Soviet historians wrote books showing that it was American anti-communist aggression that was the problem. They used examples like the Truman Doctrine, where Truman said that they needed to prevent communism spreading to other countries, and the way that western Germany united to make Trizonia and the creation of NATO showed the non-communist countries working together against the USSR. They also pointed out that the atom bomb and hydrogen bomb were invented by USA, so they triggered the arms race by forcing Russia to keep up. Since USSR had censorship, this also meant that universities could only publish evidence that supported the USSR, so as well as patriotism, they were limited from being able to consider evidence from both sides.

Another example is American historians in the 1960s. With the Vietnam War, more Americans began to be critical of American foreign policy and to not support what they saw as imperialism and aggression. This started to make historians see that after 1945 America had also been aggressive, not just USSR. Some blamed American big business for manufacturing a war in order to make money from military contracts.

By the 1990s and 2000s, many Russian and American historians were more similar in their views. There was more openness in Russia after Communism ended, and also both sides had access to archives of evidence that they had not seen before, like Volkogonov who used archives to show Stalin’s aggression. This meant that historians in both countries saw that the Cold War was really caused by mutual fear and mistrust, not just one side being aggressive.

Examiner commentary

The candidate first shows that they have understood the source fully. Further, the candidate has analysed more than one historiographical school of thought which would not agree with the source, and been clear as to why they had a differing attitude. In explaining this, the candidate used good precise examples of supporting knowledge.

Medium banded response

The source says that the two sides could not avoid a Cold War because they didn't understand each other well and so a war was inevitable. Russian historians would not have agreed with this because the USSR government was Communist and they hated the capitalist West. The government censored what they wrote anyway to make sure it supported Communism. They used examples of American aggression like the Truman Doctrine to show that the whole problem was American aggression.

But American historians also said that it was completely the fault of USSR. They used examples like the Berlin Blockade to say that Stalin was completely aggressive. Stalin tried to force the West to give up control of Berlin and the historians said that this showed that the problem was USSR and that USA had no choice but to get involved in a Cold War.

Examiner commentary

This answer is banded as medium, as it shows some awareness of the debate. It has used two aspects of the source in the answer and supported an explanation of the differing views with knowledge which is accurate and relevant.

To improve, the answer needs a wider range of opinions, and more development of the depth and breadth of supporting knowledge. For example, although they mentioned one American view, the candidate could show how this interpretation changed in the 1960s and 70s.

Question 5

Describe one example of Nazi policies in the 1920s.

[2 marks]

High banded response

One policy was wanting to abolish the Treaty of Versailles. This was because it was humiliating and the reparations of £6.6 billion were bankrupting Germany.

Examiner commentary

This candidate has written one specific point. They have then developed it with an example which is precise.

Medium banded response

One idea was that they said they would end the Treaty of Versailles. Another was that they would improve employment in Germany.

Examiner commentary

This candidate has identified a good example of a policy. Unfortunately, the second part is a separate policy, not a development of the first policy. Because the question says one policy, the second one does not get a mark.

Question 6

Explain how the Reichstag Fire helped the Nazis to secure control of Germany in 1933.

[10 marks]

High banded response

One reason that the Reichstag Fire helped the Nazi Party was by helping them to consolidate power. When Hitler became Chancellor, he only had 33% of the Reichstag in his control, which had fallen from earlier elections, and 2 ministers in the cabinet. Hitler was able to use the fire, which was blamed on van der Lubbe, a Dutch Communist, to conduct a “war on Marxism” and present himself as the only safe option against Communism. This contributed to a massive Nazi election win of 43% on the 7th March which left Hitler in a far stronger position in the government and allowed him to push through a Reichstag vote for the Enabling Act which made him a dictator.

Also, the Reichstag Fire enabled Hitler to persuade Hindenburg to award him emergency powers which suspended civil liberties. This allowed him to conduct an aggressive plan against the Communist Party. 4,000 were arrested, including Thälmann who was their leader. Communist newspapers were shut down. As well as contributing to the election result, this reinforced the popular view that Hitler was a good leader who was taking action. Other people, who might have opposed Hitler, were intimidated into not standing against Nazi policies.

Examiner commentary

The candidate has two separate ways that the Fire was important. Although they are connected, they are not the same idea. Each one of the points is explained with specific examples of knowledge which are precise, like election results and dates. Also, it used language that clearly shows that they understand the second order idea of causation, or in other words, being able to link the event to the changes that it caused.

Medium banded response

The Reichstag Fire was important because it increased the control that Hitler had in the government. The Communists were blamed for the fire, and Hitler used emergency powers to arrest Communists. This made people trust his government more and believe that the Nazi Party was a good choice to prevent the Communists being a threat, so Hitler won 43% in the March 1933 election after the Fire, which obviously helped the Nazis.

Examiner commentary

This candidate has linked their explanation to the question. The information is accurate and relevant, though a bit general except for the election result. Since there is one reason, this is given a medium band.

Question 7a

Study Source A. Explain how this source is useful to a historian studying Nazi Germany.

[5 marks]

High banded response

The source is quite useful to historians because it shows that the Nazi government had control of people. It says that they controlled “all of the press and radio stations.” This is true because after 1933, the Nazi Ministry of Enlightenment and Propaganda made sure that only pro-Nazi reports were shared. It also shows how propaganda was used to scare people, by saying that propaganda claimed that complaining would “threaten the Third Reich” and that this meant people did not complain to avoid being treated as an enemy. People were scared of being reported on by Gestapo informers, even their own friends or family, and there were stories of people locked up just for making jokes so they chose to not complain.

The source is also useful as it is reliable. It is a report by socialists to exiled leaders, who were trying to organise opposition. After 1933, the socialists and other parties had been disbanded as part of Gleichshaltung, which meant that they had no way to share their worries. So they would have wanted accurate reports to help them to plan opposition, not exaggerated reports. This was not to publish to support the opposition cause, so there was no need to exaggerate.

However, there is a limitation to the usefulness. Because they were interested in the threat of violence against them, the socialists who wrote it only mentioned fear and violence. But lots of people also supported the government for patriotic, positive reasons. Some liked the Nazi promises of work and food, like rebuilding the army and the RAD which employed young men, whereas others liked the rewards like the KDF which gave music concerts and holidays to workers who supported the Nazi government.

So overall, this source is useful because it contains accurate knowledge about how the government kept control, though it is limited by not showing all the ways that the Nazis kept control, and it is a reliable, unexaggerated report.

Examiner commentary

This is a really full answer. It has several good points. Most importantly, it combines the provenance (e.g. commenting on the issue of the purpose of the report making it more reliable) with details in the source (like the reference to control of the media) and detailed contextual knowledge (having details of Nazi policies which are relevant).

It also shows a two sided answer which helps to create a decision which answers the question at the end.

Medium banded response

This source is not very useful. It is definitely unreliable because it was written by socialists and they were banned after 1934 because Nazis were the only party that could operate. So they would have disliked the Nazi Party and have a very negative viewpoint about them. The source is also a report to people who were out of the country so it might have some true points but they also might have exaggerated the points to show the socialists how extreme their problems were. It is not a piece of propaganda though, so they were not trying to persuade anyone of anything. Therefore, this source is not very useful overall because it is not reliable.

Examiner commentary

This candidate has made some valid points about the reliability of the source, though they are a bit generalised. They have even used some contextual knowledge. However, they have not used and analysed the content of the source at all, so this answer would not be able to move to the top level.

Question 7b

Study Source B. Explain why this source was published in Germany at this time.

[5 marks]

High banded response

The main reason that this poster was published was to make people blackout properly by reminding them of the dangers of leaving lights on. The poster shows a British bomber about to drop a bomb over a German city, using the light from a house that has not blacked out a window. In 1943, allied planes were bombing German cities more and more regularly. They were making so many raids in 1943 that 'Bomber' Harris claimed in December that they would soon end the war. Having a proper blackout would make it harder for the bombers to target cities with houses and factories and so more bombs would miss their targets, leading to fewer casualties and less damage to industry. In 1943, German morale was weakening because of problems in Russia. Reducing the casualties and damage by a proper blackout would limit morale problems. The plane is exaggerated with a skeleton meaning death and a clear slogan, which would make sure that people took the poster seriously.

Examiner commentary

This candidate has done both necessary things, they have answered with selected details from the source and also shown specific, detailed contextual knowledge. The candidate has actually contextually linked two relevant issues, the context of morale problems and knowledge of the scale of the bombing.

Medium banded response

This source was produced to remind people that they should turn off their lights. It is made in 1943, and this was when the allied bombers were conducting a large bombing campaign of cities in Germany. This was seen as the fastest way to break the morale of the German people. For example, Hamburg was bombed day and night for a week, destroying half of the city and killing 40,000 people. Therefore, the German government wanted lights to stay off so that the bombers could not be accurate and do so much destruction.

Examiner commentary

This answer is very detailed, and the candidate has a really good contextual knowledge which is great. However, it does not use any details specifically from the source so it cannot get more than a medium banded response.



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