

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y220/01 Summer 2022 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

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Paper Y220/01 series overview

Most of the responses adhered to the correct convention and answered both questions from either Question 1 or Question 2. A few candidates selected one or more from both questions. Both questions were equally popular. There were some very good responses. However, some responses showed a level of supporting knowledge that was generalised.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">understood the key issues in the questionsknew the key events with reasonable depth of knowledge to be able to effectively support their arguments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">did not focus their responses on the question askedhad a generalised knowledge rather than detailed knowledgedid not manage their time effectively to be able to fully complete responses to both questions.

Key point – study the question before answering

Candidates would enhance their performance if the wording of the questions was considered carefully, so that they are focused on the specific demands of the question.

Question 1 (a)

1 (a) Which of the following had the more serious consequences for Italy?

- (i) The decision to stay out of World War One in 1914
- (ii) The decision to enter World War One in 1915

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

Responses to this question should be focused on a comparative analysis of which of these two decisions had the most serious consequences for Italy. There were some good responses to this question, but some focused more on the reasons why Italy made these decisions rather than analysing the consequences. Most candidates correctly identified that the decision to stay out of the war led to accusations of the Liberal government not pursuing nationalist policies which resulted in greater challenges for the government. Some candidates would have benefitted from looking more broadly at the impact on Liberal governments.

The consequences of entering WW1 tended to be well answered and, in many responses, offered greater depth than their analysis of the decision to stay out of the war. The more accomplished responses demonstrated detailed knowledge and understanding by referring to the impact of Caporetto and how the decision to enter the war increased the support for other groups such as the Fascists.

Question 1 (b)*

(b)* 'Mussolini was incapable of fulfilling his aims in foreign policy during the years from 1922 to 1940.' How far do you agree? **[20]**

Many candidates approached this question by analysing Mussolini's aims as being to make Italy 'great, respected and feared'. This approach allowed candidates to look at a broad range of events and present a balanced argument. However, a significant number of candidates struggled to engage with the key issue of analysing whether Mussolini was 'incapable of fulfilling his aims'. The question was not asking if Mussolini's foreign policy was successful or not but whether he was incapable of achieving it. A balanced argument would have focused on whether he was capable or incapable. For example, Mussolini was incapable of preventing Hitler from achieving Anschluss with Austria in 1938 but had been capable of preventing it in 1934. More accomplished responses, such as Exemplar 1, demonstrated success with this approach.

Exemplar 1 is an extract from a Level 6 response which addresses the question by focusing on the key issue of whether 'Mussolini was capable of fulfilling his aims'.

Exemplar 1

A factor that especially highlights Mussolini as incapable of fulfilling his foreign policy aims is the subservience of Italy to Nazi Germany. The two countries allied in 1936 with the Rome - Berlin axis. This comprised agreements including set areas for each country to expand into, and that Hitler would not carry out an Anschluss. Despite this, only two years later Hitler took over Austria without discussing this with Mussolini. Even though this had happened, Mussolini again allied with Hitler in 1939 with the pact of steel. Italian government attempted to negotiate with Hitler to allow at least 3 years before starting war to allow Italy to fully prepare, but this was ignored. The fact that Mussolini continued to ally with Hitler after he had proven himself to be entirely focused on German ambitions and not Italian ones shows a lack of ability in foreign policy. This was bound to end up with Italy being a secondary power to Germany - very far from his aim of becoming a feared great power. Therefore, the overall

failure of attempts to further foreign policy by siding with Nazi Germany demonstrates that Mussolini was incapable of fulfilling his aims in foreign policy.

Question 2 (a)

2 (a) Which was the greater failure of Mussolini's foreign policy?

- (i) The establishment of the Rome-Berlin Axis
- (ii) Entry into the Second World War

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

This question required candidates to provide a comparative analysis of the two events in relation which of them was the greater failure. Many candidates demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding of both these events. However, some candidates used their knowledge to provide either a good account of the relationship between Mussolini and Hitler from 1936 onwards or an explanation of the reasons for entering the war in 1940 and describing Italy's failure in the war.

Responses that achieved the highest marks looked at both factors equally, using detailed knowledge and understanding and made explicit reference to which was the greatest failure in the conclusion (see Exemplar 2). Most of the responses that took this approach, understandably, tended to conclude that the entry into the Second World War was the greater failure as it directly led to the invasion of Italy and Mussolini's downfall.

Exemplar 2 is an extract taken from an overall Level 5 response. It shows a strong comparative of failure in the concluding paragraph.

Exemplar 2

In conclusion, entry into the Second World War in 1940 was the greater failure because although the Rome-Berlin axis did force Mussolini to enter the war premature to what he had asked from Hitler, entry into the war itself caused the downfall of his foreign policy. Mussolini wanted Italy to become a great power with a colonial empire and to be a European statesman involved in signing treaties which the Berlin-Rome Axis achieved. The entry into World War two resulted in the loss of international prestige, empire, and Italy was not regarded highly as a great power. The Rome-Berlin Axis alone, was achieving international status and had the potential to claim part of Germany's growing prestige. So entry to war was a greater failure.

Question 2 (b)*

(b)* Assess the reasons for the development of the wars between Charles V and France in the period from 1521 to 1559. **[20]**

The focus of responses to this question should be to provide a balanced argument as to whether nationalism and socialism were a serious challenge to Italy in the year before WWI. Many candidates were well informed on the challenges posed by both groups during this period. However, knowledge and understanding were more readily demonstrated for socialism where candidates made specific references to percentage of votes and significant events such as 'Red Week' in 1914.

Some candidates struggled to present a balanced argument. The question asks if nationalism and socialism were a serious challenge and therefore a two-sided response would argue first that they were a serious challenge before proceeding to consider the alternative view that they were not or that the seriousness of the challenge was somewhat exaggerated. Many responses did not include arguments that these challenges were exaggerated (see Exemplar 3). For example, it could have been pointed out that the heavy defeat of the radical left in the 1904 elections questioned the challenge of socialism.

Some candidates approached the question in terms of 'what was the most serious challenge to Italy' and presented alternative challenges such as liberal weaknesses, problems with the political system and uneasy relationship between the Vatican and the State. This approach meant that some candidates provided knowledge that was not relevant to the question and, therefore, could not be credited.

Exemplar 3 is an extract from a Level 5 response which shows some analysis of an argument that nationalism was not a serious threat.

Exemplar 3

Nationalists were not such a serious threat to an extent as they did not gather many votes during the period of 1896-1915. They were vocal in the press and in what they called for but a part from their pressure during the intervention crisis which ~~only had an impact after 1915~~ led to impacts being felt after 1918. But nationalists hated socialists similarly to how Catholics and liberals did and so to some extent a negative cohesion was created in the trasformismo. The nationalists led the call however to create colonial empire in 1896 and this resulted in the defeat at Adowa where 50,000 Italian soldiers were defeated. Adowa caused so much national humiliation that it forced Francesco Crispi, the Prime Minister to resign. The defeat was so disastrous as it was the first time that a European force had been defeated by an African state in modern times.

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