

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY A**

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**H505**

For first teaching in 2015

**Y221/01 Summer 2024 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.

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## Paper Y221/01 series overview

Y221 is one of 24 units in Paper 2 for the A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about 100 years through a short answer essay question and a traditional essay question. The paper contains two questions, each having two parts, a short answer essay and a traditional essay. Candidates have to answer both parts of one question.

To do well on the short-answer essay question, candidates need to consider the significance or importance of both issues, factors, individuals or events mentioned in relation to the question. Having analysed or explained both they must reach a supported judgement as to which is the most important or significant.

To do well on the traditional essay, candidates need to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. To reach the higher levels candidates need to assess the issues they discuss and reach a supported judgement, at least in the conclusion.

Overall Question 1 was the more popular of the two questions on the paper.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short answer essay</li> <li>reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important</li> <li>linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question</li> <li>discussed at least two issues in depth when answering the essay question</li> <li>comparatively evaluated their chosen factors in the essays</li> <li>provided accurate and relevant supporting detail to the question set, not just the topic</li> <li>reach a supported judgement about the issue in the question</li> <li>made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way</li> <li>produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion; or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response</li> <li>were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question</li> <li>showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay</li> <li>were unable to support their answer with relevant or accurate material</li> <li>did not focus on the precise wording of the question</li> <li>made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.</li> </ul>

## Question 1 (a)

- 1
- (a) Which of the following was the more important reason for Hitler's appointment as Chancellor?
- (i) The Great Depression
- (ii) Nazi propaganda

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

[10]

This was the more popular of the 2 questions on this paper. In general terms the question was well answered, although some candidates wrote more generally on both factors and were therefore unable to reach Level 4 – Level 6.

When examining the role of the Depression as a reason for Hitler's appointment, stronger responses were able to show how the Depression led to reduced confidence in Weimar democracy, and the increase in support for extremist parties including the Nazis and the Communists. Good answers were able to discuss the economic consequences of the Depression in detail and show how the Nazis offered solutions to these problems. Only the best responses were able to discuss big business and the reasoning behind its support for the Nazis. Weaker responses tended to confuse the impact of the Great Depression with that of the hyperinflation crisis of 1923 and were confined to the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When analysing the role of propaganda, most candidates could discuss the appeal and impact of Hitler as a public speaker, and the role of speeches and rallies as an important factor in his appointment as Chancellor. Goebbels was well-known, although many candidates referred to him as the Minister for Propaganda, which was outside the scope of the question. The best responses referred to the 'Hitler over Germany' campaign and were rewarded. Another common misconception were references to the People's Receiver and the role of radio, which again came after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor.

### Misconception



Several misconceptions were noted in this question. Many candidates confused the Great Depression with the hyperinflation crisis of 1923. There were references to price increases, rather than the opposite that occurred during the Great Depression.

Similarly, there were misconceptions about propaganda, with Goebbels being given the title of Minister for Propaganda before January 1933 as well as other references to the People's Receiver, which again occurred after the date in the question.

## Exemplar 1

1	a	<p>The Great Depression was a critically important reason for Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in 1933, creating much discontent amongst Germans and a loss of faith in the Weimar Republic. The Great Depression caused by the Wall Street Crash in 1929 caused <del>world</del> the wealth of the world's nations to fall by 15%, causing economic aid programmes such as the Young Plan to be recalled, and the USA <del>to</del> placed many protectionist measures <del>to</del> protect their economy, hurting German exports. Unemployment in Germany rose from 1,600,000 in 1929 to 3 million in 1930 and finally to 6 million in 1933. This meant that a vast amount of workers were suddenly out of work causing incomes and living standards to worsen, leading to higher discontent and local violence. Many looked for <del>the</del> a group to blame for economic hardship and began to follow the Nazis' message that the Jews were responsible, leading to greater antisemitism and support for Nazism, evidenced by <del>thousands</del> its increase in electoral success following the Depression, with</p>
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18.3% of votes in September 1930 and 37.3% of the vote in July 1932.

Nazi propaganda, on the other hand, was also a significant factor. The Nazis' highly distributed 25-point programme with promises of *Lebensraum* or increased land for Germans and a repeal of the hated Treaty of Versailles as well as their ~~strategy~~ tactics of using German Jews as a scapegoat for the ~~Huber~~ *stab in the back* myth led to a surge in popularity for Nazism. Also, the publication of *Mein Kampf*, Hitler's book detailing his vision for German society, written in 1924 whilst in prison, was a bestseller that attracted many Germans, especially young people, to Nazism. Also, the Nazis held mass rallies and utilised Hitler's ~~charms~~ charismatic oratory abilities to rouse support, and the use of ~~exp~~ airplanes to travel ~~to~~ all over Germany on campaign made Nazism seem modern and exciting. Also the use of colour in the Nazi flag of black, red and white reminded the public

of the still beloved Kaiserreich and signalled that Nazism meant a return to better days for Germany. The propaganda machine was headed by Joseph Goebbels who tactically utilised posters, radio and ~~span~~ newspapers such as the Volkischer Beobachter to ingilterate German people's ~~consciousness~~ consciousness and establish Nazism as ~~an idea~~ and Hitler as a popular movement.

Overall, it is clear that, although Nazi propaganda was certainly significant in garnering support for Hitler and the NSDAP through Goebbels' mastery of media, and the ~~idea~~ promises of a stronger Germany with a repeal of the Versailles Treaty and ~~the~~ a focus on antisemitism as well as ~~the~~ the Führerprinzip gathering loyalty ~~the~~ around Hitler as a central figure, it was the Great Depression that was the main reason for Hitler's appointment as Chancellor. The Depression caused mass unemployment and economic strife, ~~to~~ and it is clear that this was what provoked Nazi ~~popul~~



		popularity. Even with the entire Nazi
		propaganda machine at work, in May
		1928 <del>the</del> pro-Weimar parties won
		72.8% of the vote, whereas after
		the Depression, the Nazi vote rose
		exponentially.

This is a clear Level 6 response. Both factors are thoroughly analysed and evaluated using accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding of key features of the period, in order to reach a developed and substantiated judgement in relation to the question.

### Question 1 (b)\*

(b)\* 'Economic problems were the most important consequence of the Second World War for Germany in the period from 1945 to 1949.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

The important feature of this question was for candidates to focus on the consequences of WW2. Many adopted the social, political and economic model and in doing so this proved to be a fruitful approach to this question. In examining economic consequences, the best responses examined the destruction of infrastructure by allied bombing, as well as the loss of livelihoods and the results of allied reparations and the further damage to Germany's economy. They also looked at the immediate shortages of various commodities post 1945, as well as the longer term economic consequences of the collapse of Germany's economy and the impact of the winter of 1946-47 as well as the Berlin airlift.

In examining the consequences of other factors, candidates were able to discuss the allied occupation and division of Germany as well as the breakdown of allied co-operation, leading to the Berlin airlift and the eventual division of the country. The best responses also examined the role of demilitarisation and denazification as well as the other social consequences in terms of education as well as social trauma. Weaker responses tended to include information from beyond the scope of the question, for example the building of the Berlin Wall and its impact.

## Exemplar 2

Economic problems were certainly a consequence of the second World War for Germany. The Nazi policy of total war had led industries to significantly lose focus on the production of consumer goods and this meant that living standards were low and food

prices and rationing were very high. Also, ~~the~~ much of the working population had perished in the war, with two thirds of males born in 1918 having died, leaving production unable to proceed efficiently. Also, ~~there~~ in ~~the~~ the period of 1945-48, the four zones of occupied Germany saw a huge growth ~~and~~ in the black market, as currency issues with the military mark and price concerns ~~led to the~~ leading to this development. Absenteeism was at record highs ~~to~~ from 1945-48 with workers lacking incentives, and ~~unemployment~~ unemployment was also high, only ~~to~~ decreasing below ~~1 million~~ 1% in ~~1953~~ 1955 in the West. ~~The~~

Also, the Allied bombing of key ~~industrial~~ industrial regions such as the Saar and the Rhineland as well as the Ruhr ~~as well as the~~ had led to industrial shortages with production not returning to 1938 levels 1936 levels until well into the 1950s. Also the bombing of urban centres such as Dresden during the war had led to the homelessness of over 200,000

Germans which caused housing issues and led to economic strife. Also, another economic problem in the Soviet ~~zone~~ ~~zone~~ was the devaluing of the currency with the printing of more money of the Military Mark. Also, the Soviet Union was allowed to take 25% of ~~Germany~~ there were other ~~very~~ significant consequences for the Second World War for Germany in 1945-49. Political problems such as the division of Germany into ~~four~~ zones with industrial production from the Western zones, and also took 2500 factories from Germany following the war. ~~Germany~~

Another critical economic problem caused by the war was the Berlin Blockade, which was actually caused by the division of Germany into four zones under the war's victors. The USSR in 1948 blockaded the Western zone of Berlin, preventing any transfer of supplies by road or rail from entering, in an attempt to force West

Berlin to secede to the Eastern zone. This led to rationing and economic shortages in ~~the~~ for West Berlin and ~~also~~, if not for the Berlin Airlift in which 279,000 flights brought 2.3 million tonnes of supplies to West Berlin, it is likely that these problems would have worsened.

However, there were other very significant consequences such as the political consequences of the war. The division of Germany into four zones controlled by the USA, the UK, France and the USSR as well as the creation of the ~~1949~~ Federal Republic of Germany in 1949 and the German Democratic Republic ~~in~~ in 1949 meant that Germany

would not be unified ~~is still~~  
~~the~~ for decades, splitting  
 the people and forcing them to  
 live under separate governments  
 Also, the creation of the SED  
 in the Soviet ~~zone~~ zone and  
 the establishment of a de facto  
 one-party state in the GDR in

1949 meant that East Germans once  
 again lived under authoritarianism  
 with a ~~the~~ ruthless secret police,  
 the Stasi, ~~the~~ using terror to control. ~~the~~  
~~these~~

There were also very significant  
 economic benefits to some or all  
 of Germany following the war. In  
~~1948~~ 1948, the introduction of  
 the Deutschmark ~~to~~ by the  
 Western zones including Bizonia  
 and later Trizonia stabilised the  
 economy, and led to a vast ~~reduction~~  
 reduction of absenteeism and ~~the~~ a  
 decline in the black market, as  
 well as employment levels rising  
 once again, and a greater  
 sense of confidence in the economy  
 was felt. The Marshall Aid



programme initiated by the USA as a means of maintaining ~~of~~ anti-communism in Europe, meant that West Germany and the Western zones experienced significant economic recovery, ~~is~~ whilst the Soviet zone's rejection of Marshall Aid led to further economic differentiation between the Western and Eastern

zone.

Also, an arguable consequence of the war and the subsequent division of Germany was the establishment of democracy in the West. For the first time since 1933, ~~a~~ Germans lived under democracy, with the Basic Law of the FRG in 1949 ~~stating~~ that ensuring free elections and ~~a~~ preventing the rise of dictators through the representative system, whilst the mixed system of proportional representation and first-past-the-post ~~led~~ led to an inability for extreme, smaller parties to rise in power.

In conclusion, it is clear that whilst economic problems were a significant consequence, it was political consequences of the war that were more significant. The division of Germany lasting 40 years and the establishment of democracy in the west and totalitarianism in the east was far more significant, and also

there were even some economic benefits such as the effects of currency reform and Marshall Aid.

This exemplar shows a Level 6 response which considers these issues in some depth, making thoughtful judgements throughout.

## Question 2 (a)

2

(a) Which of the following had the greater impact on Germany during the Second World War?

(i) Internal opposition and resistance

(ii) Allied bombing raids

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

[10]

This was the least popular of the two questions but still elicited a wide range of response. Candidates were asked to consider the impact of opposition and allied bombing raids on Germany. The best responses were able to discuss these in detail, with these candidates able to discuss the impact of youth resistance through the White Rose, Edelweiss Pirates and Swing Youth and compare this to the role of the Kreisau Circle or other organised movements. Most candidates were able to discuss the seriousness of the July bomb plot amongst others. Weaker responses wrote more generally about the impact of resistance on morale without naming specific opposition groups.

When discussing allied bombing, weaker responses again wrote generally on allied raids and discussed the impact on morale or industrial production. Better answers were able to refer to specific raids on Berlin, Dresden or Hamburg and coupled that with excellent use of statistics.



## Exemplar 3

2a	<p>Internal opposition had the <del>greater</del> smaller impact on Germany in WW2 compared to allied bombing raids. Oppositional groups such as the White Rose movement under Hans and Sophie Scholl distributed anti-Nazi leaflets throughout universities; this did not have a greatly significant impact on Germany <sup>during the</sup> war because they were quickly <del>blat</del> and hung for their crimes - <del>quickly</del> abolishing the movement. Internal opposition from the Edelweiss Pirates did have an impact on Germany; they colluded with underground groups of Army deserters and escaped prisoners of war in Hamburg, leading to them murdering the head of the Gestapo within the <del>Army</del>, having a vast impact on <del>the German</del> <del>Gestapo</del> <del>forces</del> Germany because it removed a valuable member of the Gestapo forces. The July bomb plot, whereby army officials plotted to plant a bomb in Hitler's speech 1944 did have an impact on Germany, <del>proving</del> <sup>revealing</sup> that the army could abandon their oath of loyalty and showed the unpopularity of Nazi military tactics internally. Therefore, internal opposition and resistance did impact Germany during WW2, however it was quickly stamped out and lacked organisation, so was not the greatest impact.</p> <p>Allied bombing raids had the greater impact on Germany during WW2, with the intensity of the bombing amplifying in 1942, named Blitzkrieg.</p>
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In Dresden it led to 70% of buildings being destroyed and the deaths of 150,000 people, this had the greatest impact because it prevented Germany from reaching its full economic potential, with ~~more~~ the manufacturing of planes only being able to rise from 8,000 - 10,000 in 1939-41 due to the obliteration of buildings. Allied bombing raids further prove to have the greatest impact, with a firestorm in Hamburg causing the deaths of 30,000 people, this also proves that bombing had the greatest impact because more civilians were killed through bombing than soldiers killed on the battlefield. However, it could be argued that the impact wasn't so great, with it boosting morale and the Gestapo forcing people to keep fighting. Therefore, Allied bombing did have the greatest impact compared to internal opposition and resistance.

In conclusion, internal opposition to Allied bombing had the greatest impact on Germany during WW2 compared to internal opposition and resistance, although resistance promoted anti-war ideals, the ~~more~~ SS and Hitler's forces executed high leaders which limited impact. Although it could be argued that the impact of Allied bombing was limited due to the Gestapo forcing people to persevere, it led to more deaths than soldiers on the battlefield. Additionally the July bomb plot failed to kill Hitler, whilst Allied

		bombing highly impaired an economic industrial production, with some historians arguing that this prevented Germany's success in WW2. Overall, allied bombing had the greatest impact on Germany during WW2 compared to internal opposition and resistance.
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This exemplar shows a Level 6 response which considers both factors in depth before arriving at a judgement.

### Question 2 (b)\*

(b)\* 'West Germany's strengths far outweighed its weaknesses in 1963.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

The essay elicited a wide range of responses, with a minority of candidates mistaking East and West Germany unfortunately. Better responses tended to adopt the social, political and economic model, which proved a fruitful method for this particular essay question.

The differential for most candidates was the amount of detail provided for their arguments as well as the quality of interim and final judgements. When examining economic strengths, virtually all candidates could discuss Erhard's "economic miracle" although the best responses substantiated their arguments with accurate detail and statistics to demonstrate West Germany's strengths. Similarly, many candidates could discuss Adenauer's political control and the removal of minority parties as well as social improvements including improved housing, social welfare etc. A significant strength for most candidates was the improvement to West Germany's international position, with references to the ECSC and NATO much in evidence.

In terms of weaknesses, the best responses were able to discuss the inequalities of wealth distribution, criticisms of Adenauer's authoritarian approach (and the Der Spiegel affair) as well as West Germany's relations with the Soviet Union as well as the East.

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