

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y220/01 Summer 2024 series

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper Y220/01 series overview	4
Question 1 (a)	5
Question 1 (b)*	8
Question 2 (a)	11
Question 2 (b)	13

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.

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Paper Y220/01 series overview

Y220 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 must 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.

Question 2 was more popular than Question 1.

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

Question 1 (a)

1

(a) Which of the following was the greater failure of Fascist economic policy during the period from 1925 to 1943?

(i) Agrarian policy

(ii) Industrial policy

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

[10]

The purpose of this question was for candidates to focus their responses on whether agrarian policy or industrial policy was the greater failure. Most candidates were aware of the purpose and there were some good attempts to address the question. However, a significant number of responses did not fully focus on the question because they did not have a clear understanding of what constituted agrarian and industrial policies. Some responses referred to the Battle for Land in their analysis of industrial policies, rather than agrarian policy. Therefore, some responses were generalised in their knowledge and analysis.

There were few responses that provided knowledge and analysis of the Corporate State or the failure of the drive for Autarky and hardly any responses provided counterarguments to the effect that some aspects of these policies were successful. For example, responses could have referred to the success of the Battle for Land in Campagna and the Pontine.

Assessment for learning



Always read the question carefully. Identify the key words and phrases and it is advisable to use those words throughout a response and this should help to keep an answer focused on the specific demands of the question.

Exemplar 1

1	a	<p>Firstly, For the Fascist regime's agrarian policy was only a failure to a relatively small extent, given the context of Italy's situation from 1925 to 1943. The most abject failures were seen in the South of the country, which had one of the lowest average calorie intakes during the war, bringing the national standing down to 28th in a European league table. However, this is also attributed to Mussolini's unrealistic ambition of autarky, meaning that even if agrarian policy was relatively substantial, it couldn't rely on imports of grain and wheat due to stipulations of the Second World War from 1940. Consequently, at the time rationing was finally introduced in 1943, the Italy had the lowest bread ration (of 250 grams) of any combatant country except the USSR. In contrast, there were some successes that mean Mussolini's agricultural policy wasn't a total failure, the 'battle for grain' from 1925 increased the average harvest from 5.5 million tonnes of grain a year to over 7 million ten years later. Overall however, agrarian policy only got worse and the general population greatly suffered from a lack of food and consequential high high inflation.</p> <p>On the other hand, Mussolini's Fascist regime's industrial policy was was a colossal failure and had a devastating effect on workers rights, exports and the nation's future. By 1926 the fortunate economic boom in Europe that the Mussolini had experienced, which saw exports double, was coming to an end.</p>
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~~the~~ Mussolini's policy of the 'battle for the lira' from 1927 to reduce the exchange rate of the lira to the pound from 250 to 90 was a propaganda victory, yet had devastating effects. The export industries went into an extreme depression, and Mussolini's highly influenced on most industries only made matters worse. Moreover, later on in 1929 he claimed the success of the 'corporate state' with 22 corporations covering all aspects of the economy. 3 years after its creation in 1926 it was truly a failure. It only further angered workers who had their rights taken away from them and put into practice (it failed) to effectively re-arm Italy for the Second World War. Overall the failure, ~~was~~ were due to see with unemployment at over 2 million by 1933, on the whole Mussolini's policy was a huge failure. The only potential counter to this would be that he was unfortunate to have to re-arm, as conflict looked likely with Hitler's aggressive Nazi regime threatening the status quo in Europe.

In conclusion, the greater failure of Fascist policy from 1925 to 1943 was in the realm of industry, not agriculture. There were definitely some huge failures in agricultural policy as a result of Mussolini's lack of critical thinking such as the neglect of the South, however there were definitely some successes like the 'battle for grain' raising production levels. In contrast, the regime's industrial policy was a disaster, leading to high unemployment and a severely underperforming

		army which greatly threatened the nation's standard of living and national security. Despite the climate of a hostile Europe, Mussolini's failures were a result of policies designed to increase Fascist power, not to aid the country and the consequences were fatal.
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Exemplar 1 is a good attempt to address the question and provide a substantiated judgement by providing some detailed knowledge and consistent focus on the question. This response attained Level 5.

Question 1 (b)*

(b)* 'During the period from 1896 to 1915, Italy's most serious problem was the legacy of *Trasformismo*.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

Most candidates understood that the purpose of the question was to focus on the problems that faced Italy in the period 1896 to 1915. Some candidates took the opportunity to describe some of the problems but then provided limited analysis of which was the most serious. The more accomplished responses started by explaining the 'legacy of *Trasformismo*', which led to formation of short-lived governments throughout this period, and then provided detailed knowledge and analysis of other problems with which to address the question.

Despite there being several problems, such as the North/South Divide, mass emigration, failures of foreign policy, growth of socialism and nationalism, opposition of the Papacy and the Intervention Crisis 1914/15. Some responses were hampered by a lack of understanding of *Trasformismo*.

Exemplar 2

		trasformismo and its legacy did pose a serious problem for Italy in weakening the liberal government 1896-1915. the system of trasformismo being composed of coalition governments created a fragile political system which ultimately created a problem for Italy in their ineffective strategies and lack of cohesion to provide a strong government. Furthermore the political system did not lend itself to representing the majority of the
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population leading to unrest within Italy
 creating problems of discontent. Although
 the government attempted to reduce
 the problem Trasformismo posed through
 Giolitti's solution of Gran Trasformismo,
 broadening liberal appeal to work
 with the Catholics, this was a temporary
 solution to the problem which persisted.
 Following Gran Trasformismo the
 Liberal won 374/511 seats in ~~1913~~ 1909
 which could indicate perhaps
 trasformismo's legacy was not a serious
 problem however this was only
 possible due to secret negotiations with
 the Catholics to increase support - which
~~soon~~ collapsed in Gentolini's Pact 1911.
 Therefore Trasformismo could not be
 overcome as a problem for the Italian
 government and subsequently a
 weak political system remained an
 issue in liberal Italy. However
 arguably the system itself was only
 a serious problem when other
 political parties, most noticeably the
 socialists began to exploit this
 weakness.

Exemplar 2 is a good attempt to explain and analyse the problem of Trasformismo. The response identifies one of the problems of Trasformismo in that it led to weak governments and then went on to explain other problems. This response attained Level 6.

Question 2 (a)

2

(a) Which of the following was more important in explaining the rise of Mussolini?

- (i) The appeal of Fascism
- (ii) The weaknesses of the post-war governments

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

[10]

There were some good attempts to address this question with most candidates understanding the purpose of the question. However, there were a significant number of responses that provided generalised knowledge and analysis of both factors. In particular, with reference to 'The appeal of Fascism' a significant number of responses missed the opportunity to give more detailed evidence of which groups and individuals such as the working class, the middle class and the King were attracted to Fascism and why. The more accomplished responses also made references to the personal abilities of Mussolini. In the context of 'The weaknesses of the post-war governments' relatively few answers referred to the mistakes of Giolitti and the role of King.

Some responses did not confine their analysis to explaining the 'rise of Mussolini' but extended their analysis to the period after he became Prime Minister in 1922 and therefore provided unnecessary knowledge at the expense of relevant analysis.

Exemplar 3

		<p>Ultimately, the more important factor in explaining the rise of Mussolini was the weakness of the post-war governments. The inability of these governments to support both the country and its people pushed many further towards fascism and meant that fascism appeared more to many as most had lost faith in the current government. As the Fascist agenda appeared to include most people in its policies, it appeared to have a stability which the post-war governments did not have. Therefore the Therefore the appeal for fascism was more prominent as the Italian public saw the weakness of post-war governments and became disillusioned, whereas Fascism offered a new beginning and a brighter future. As the weakness of post-war governments made the Fascist agenda seem more enticing, it is evident that the weakness of post-war governments was the most important factor in explaining the rise of Mussolini.</p>
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Exemplar 3 demonstrates a good attempt to provide a judgemental conclusion to Question 2 (a) by making a clear comment in the first sentence and then providing supportive comments in the rest of the paragraph which make the initial comment a judgement rather than an assertion. This response attained Level 5.

Question 2 (b)

(b)* 'Mussolini's foreign policy in the 1920s was more successful than his foreign policy in the 1930s.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

There were some good attempts to address this question and most candidates demonstrated an understanding of the demands of the questions. However, there were a significant number of responses that provided generalised and, at times, inaccurate answers because of a lack of clarity of what events constituted a success for Mussolini's foreign policy and in which decade the events occurred. The more accomplished responses made clear references to events in the 1920s such as Corfu 1923, acquisition of Fiume 1924 and the Locarno Treaty 1925. For the 1930s most responses referred to the invasion of Abyssinia 1935, the growing friendship with Hitler, and the Spanish Civil War. Relatively few responses referred to Mussolini's role at the Munich conference in 1938. Some candidates took the simplified view that foreign policy in the 1920s was successful and in the 1930s it was a failure, whereas it was more complicated than that.

Some candidates took their analysis beyond the 1930s and concluded their answers in 1943 which, of course, affected their attempts at a judgement.

Misconception



Mussolini's prevention of Hitler's attempt at Anschluss in 1934 is regarded as a major success.

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