

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY A**

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**H505**

For first teaching in 2015

**Y218/01 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.

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## Paper Y218/01 series overview

Y218 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 slightly more popular than Question 1. All candidates followed the rubric and answered both parts of one question.

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 relevant issues in depth</li> <li>gave supporting detail that was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic</li> <li>reached 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 lack of understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay</li> <li>were unable to support their response 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 of greater importance in European relations during the years 1935 to 1941?

- (i) Italian foreign policy
- (ii) Russian foreign policy

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

[10]

Most candidates realised that the purpose of this question was for them to provide knowledge and analysis of Italy's and Russia's foreign policies to establish which one was of greater importance in the relations between European countries between 1935 and 1941. Most candidates used the events of the invasion of Abyssinia 1935 and the Spanish Civil War 1936-9 in their analysis of Italian foreign policy but relatively few wrote about Italy not joining the war in 1939. Most responses used The Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 and the Spanish Civil War in their analysis of Russian foreign policy. There were a significant number of responses that made no reference to the Munich Conference of 1938 when considering both policies. The more accomplished responses were able to show which policy had the 'greater importance' by analysing the impact on the policies of other countries, for example, how various countries reacted to the failures of The League of Nations after the Italian invasion of Abyssinia.

A significant number of candidates took the opportunity to show the extent of their knowledge by describing the policies rather than using their knowledge to fully address the question. In many responses, knowledge of Italian foreign policy was better known than that of Russia. Also, knowledge of Russian foreign policy tended to focus on the period 1938-41. As a result there were a number of responses that did not provide a balanced analysis between the two policies which meant that the treatment of the two factors was uneven and, therefore, this is one of the generic criteria for Level 4.

## Exemplar 1

		<p>One reason Italian foreign policy was of greater importance is it changed the balance of power in Europe. In 1936 the Abyssinia crisis resulted in a establishment of power between Germany and Italy. As Italy invaded <del>Manchuria</del> Abyssinia without any repercussions this underpinned the allies weakness and how the League of Nations (LoN) wasn't effective. The success of Abyssinia was of greater importance in European relations because, Italy increased tensions in the region. For example, 10/11 million people voted for economic sanctions on Italy to discontinue the invasion, this did nothing but increase tension destabilising European power in 1936. As a consequence of Abyssinia the rise of extremism occurred and its imperialist qualities. Both Hitler and Mussolini had aligning ideologies in fascism, Abyssinia's success stimulated the Re-occupation of the Rhineland in 1937, Anschluss (1938) and later invasions that suited Hitler's Lebensraum such as the Sudeten crisis: <del>in 1938</del>.</p> <p>Italy's foreign policy in particular after establishing the Rome-Berlin Axis enabled the invasion and reunification of the Anschluss. Originally, Italy wanted Austria to act as a bulwark to Germany so, they had time to prepare if invaded. The new relationship removed this need and the Anschluss was taken over by Italy. This undoubtedly increased tension in European relations as, Italy had just endorsed Germany and Austria to break the Treaty of Versailles and Treaty of St. Germain. This caused massive tension between France and the Axis. Furthermore, the Rhineland the previous year caused tension between Britain and France as</p>
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		Britain believed Germany was 'walking into its back garden'. France in stark contrast saw this as a huge threat now sharing an armed border with Germany and establishing the Maginot line later in 1938. Finally, Italy made LNV ineffective as they could not act due to Veto and powers being unwilling to oppose the Axis, opting for Appeasement. Overall, Italy by far had the biggest impact on European relations as in the start of the period in 1935-6 there was strong tensions with Abyssinia and the dissolving LNV. Later in the period between 1936-39 there was a critical changing of power in the formation of the Axis, imperialism stimulation and rise of extremism which all had great importance on European relations.
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Exemplar 1 is a good attempt to provide knowledge and analysis of Italian foreign policy in relation to the question. The response attained Level 4 as the paragraph on Russian policy was not as good, therefore the response was regarded as uneven. The paragraph on Russian foreign policy did not provide the same level of detail and did not cover the whole period 1935-41.

### Question 1 (b)\*

(b)\* 'The USA's entry into the First World War was the most important factor in determining its outcome.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

The purpose of this question was for candidates to focus on the reasons for the outcome of the First World War and decide whether the USA's entry in 1917 was the most important factor. The more accomplished responses focused on the question and tended to start their responses by analysing the given factor, in which they emphasised the importance of the USA's huge industrial resources and the fact that they were not war weary as Britain and France were. Having discussed the USA, these more successful responses went on to provide analysis of some other factors, such as the decline in German/Austrian morale and the strengthening of the French under Clemenceau, with which to compare their importance. However, it is interesting to note that relatively few candidates referred to domestic situations in Germany and Austria leading to revolutions.

There were a significant number of responses that provided an explanation of various reasons for the outcome of the First World War without addressing the question as to whether the entry of the USA was the most important. At best these responses could attain Level 4.

## Exemplar 2

		<p>A final factor to consider in determining the <sup>outcome</sup> of the first world war is the Allies victories and successes which led to the weakening of Germany's forces and overall status. The allies <del>to</del> already had the upper hand in terms of foreign exports due to Britain's naval power but their success of the naval blockade on Germany caused <del>so</del> many advantages. The naval blockade meant Germany's key resources, food and essential products that were keeping Germany public alive <del>it</del> were cut off. This meant the public were starved, unrest increased and caused much internal problems for Germany who were already dealing with the international war. In addition to the naval blockade the allies use of new technology and tactics including the creeping barrage enhanced success in war, moving out of the stalemate caused <del>at</del> at the start of the war. Overall ally successes caused Germany reduction in power with its lack of supply and ability to gain help from other countries, <del>in</del> in addition to this the allies use of new techniques gained them further success and so their <del>own</del> <del>fact</del> successes linked with choices of naval blockade and <del>advantage</del> <sup>advantage</sup> <del>having</del> <del>stronger</del> <del>alliances</del> chosen stronger alliances <del>it</del> meant Germany was in a weaker position and gave them time to gain the upper hand. <del>From</del> <del>the</del> <del>ally</del> <del>success</del> The Allies success gained them a great deal of time to try to defeat Germany and become victors of the war and so is <del>an</del> an important factor when considering the outcome of World War One.</p>
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Exemplar 2 is an example of a good attempt to explain how the situation in Germany contributed to its defeat in 1918. This response explains how the British blockade contributed to the shortage of key resources and reduced Germany's capacity to continue the war. This was part of a response that attained Level 5.



**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.

**Question 2 (a)****2**

**(a)** Which of the following was of greater importance in causing the breakdown of relations between Japan and her former allies during the years 1918 to 1941?

- (i)** Japanese nationalism
- (ii)** The impact of the Depression on Japan

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

**[10]**

Most candidates realised that the purpose of this question was to focus on the breakdown of relations between Japan and her former allies and decide which of the two factors was more responsible for causing the breakdown. Although there were some good responses to this question, many responses did not fully analyse these factors because of two weaknesses. Firstly, some responses did not cover the whole period and mainly focused on the 1930s. Secondly, and more importantly, many responses provided generalised analysis of the 'former allies' because the 'former allies' were not identified and, therefore, relatively little specific detailed knowledge was provided. There was a significant number of responses that used the event of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and subsequent war with China to provide evidence for both factors. There was relevant knowledge of events provided and if a former ally was mentioned, it tended to be the USA.

**Misconception**

Japan formally declared war on Germany on 23 August 1914 as an ally of Great Britain, France and Russia. When the USA declared war in 1917, the USA and Japan found themselves on the same side and there was tension between the two over China. The Lansing-Ishii Agreement of November 1917 helped reduce those tensions.

## Question 2 (b)\*

(b)\* 'During the period from 1920 to 1935, the League of Nations failed.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

Most candidates understood the purpose of this question and there were some good attempts to address the key issue of whether the League of Nations was successful or not. Most candidates made an attempt to explain and analyse the failures of the League, particularly concerning Japan in Manchuria and Italy in Abyssinia, with varying degrees of success depending on the extent of their knowledge of these events.

The candidates who had most difficulty in addressing this question were those who did not provide a balanced argument by presenting limited knowledge and analysis of successes of the League. Also some responses did not confine their analysis to the period in the question and continued throughout the 1930s and attempted to make a judgement related to 1941.

## Exemplar 3

		Despite this, the League was successful in settling smaller
		of territorial disputes between nations in the immediate post-war
		years. For instance, the Åland Islands, controlled by Finland but
		comprised of a Swedish majority, was allowed to remain
		Finnish but with great self-governance and sovereignty, which
		both Finland and Sweden agreed on. The borders of Albania
		were redrawn by the League with agreement from Greece and
		Yugoslavia so not encroach on her them. The plebiscite
		of Lower Silesia occurred under League supervision and

2	b)	<p>reverted to largely German territory in Germany. All these cases were diplomatic successes which supported the League's charter but and ensured peace between the states. Additionally, it demonstrated that the League was strong and willing to stand up to lesser powers during conflict between lesser powers.</p> <p>The League was greatly successful when it came to humanitarian issues. The Slavery Convention emancipated over 200,000 from Sierra Leone and other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean. The Commission on Workless abolished the use of lead in paint, which reduced developmental delays, introduced the 48 hour work week, and imposed stronger worker rights on Russian carpet factories. This saved millions of people and improved the conditions for life. The League's Medical commission eradicated mosquitoes in Italy, and along with Malaria and Yellow Fever. In the USSR, it prevented a typhus outbreak with a campaign of education, and in South East Asia and South America, drastically reduced the spread of Dengue with mosquito nets and pesticides. These improved sanitary conditions were a success for the League, because it prevented human suffering and was facilitated through international cooperation, which bolstered public confidence in the League.</p>
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Exemplar 3 demonstrates a good attempt to explain and analyse some of the successes that the League of Nations had in the period 1920-35, in particular, the League's success in the Åland Islands dispute and the humanitarian work of the some of its agencies. The response attained Level 6.

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