

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H105

For first teaching in 2015

Y251/01 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 Y251 series overview

Y251 is one of five non-British Period Study units for Paper 2 for the AS Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests a period of study of about 50 years through a traditional essay and an essay based on evaluating an interpretation.

The paper is divided into two sections. The first two questions, in Section A, are traditional essay questions and the candidate is required to answer one of them. The third question, in Section B, is the compulsory interpretation question.

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

To do well in Section B, candidates needed to focus on evaluating the strengths and limitations of the given interpretation.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discussed at least two issues in depth in answering the essay question used supporting detail which was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question avoided listing factors in essays and instead evaluated their comparative importance to the given question made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question in answering the interpretation question demonstrated knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate and used this to analyse the interpretation and evaluated its strengths and weaknesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay were unable to support their answer 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 considered only strengths or limitations on the interpretation question considered the interpretation loosely or wrote a general essay question on the topic.

Section A overview

Two essays are set, each from a different key topic. Here the candidates were asked to assess the reasons for support for the Nazi dictatorship in the period 1933-39 or to examine whether the division of Germany was the most important consequence of WW2 for Germans in the period 1945-49. The questions set require candidates to analyse causes and consequences of major historical issues.

Question 1*

- 1*** Assess the reasons for the support of the Nazi Dictatorship, in Germany, in the period from 1933 to 1939. **[30]**

This was the overwhelming favourite of the essay questions on the paper and elicited a good range of responses. The best responses considered a wide range of evidence juxtaposing aspects of the Nazi apparatus of terror, including the role of the Gestapo, concentration camps and role of the legal system against genuine support of the Nazis, driven by aspects of propaganda, the Hitler myth as well as economic improvements after 1933. Good responses produced evaluative analysis of these factors, whilst weaker responses tended to list factors or produce narrative accounts that strayed into areas outside the scope of the question, including opposition movements such as the White Rose that emerged during WW2.

Assessment for learning



When writing essays, candidate should look to compare the importance of factors rather than listing them. Which factors are most important when answering the question and most importantly why?

Exemplar 1

Another big reason that made the Nazis gain support for their dictatorship was because of Nazi propaganda. The Nazis constantly pumped and pushed Nazi ideologies into the German people's mind. Now, ~~the~~ Communism was already banned etc a while back, but also all other political parties were abolished. Which meant politically the only party standing ~~in~~ etc. was the Nazis. ~~So~~ so the Germans really didn't have a choice. Going back to my point, the Nazis would constantly push and pump ~~information~~ their ideologies into German people's minds. This is clearly evident by the control the Nazis had

of the media. From my knowledge I know that newspapers, adverts and even the radio was tightly controlled by the Nazis and obviously anything offensive or against them would not be published or broadcasted etc. By doing so ~~by~~ by constantly displaying ~~the~~ presenting their thoughts ~~visions~~ the Nazis brainwashed the people ~~so~~ this therefore in itself became a (*) reason for the support of the Nazi dictatorship, because ~~they~~ the ~~the~~ Germans were just brainwashed.

This candidate response demonstrates the common issue of listing, where a candidate produces relevant factors but without necessarily comparing their importance when looking to answer the question. Here the candidate uses the starting phrase 'Another big reason' but there is no analysis of whether this is the most important factor or indeed why that might be the case.

Question 2*

2* 'The division of Germany was the most important consequence of the Second World War for Germans in the period from 1945 to 1949.'

How far do you agree?

[30]

This question was less popular and elicited few responses. This question expected candidates to examine the various consequences of WW2 on Germany, looking at the political consequences of the division of Germany, including the Berlin Blockade and the conflict between the USSR and the West. Other political consequences were also seen, including the role of denazification and political restructuring after WW2. The best responses then considered other consequences including the economic consequences of WW2 and the damage caused by Allied bombing and the need to rebuild after WW2. Social issues were also dealt with, including education and the need to rehouse refugees who were returning to Germany at the end of the war.

Section B overview

In this section candidates were asked to consider a short interpretation that stated that there was little opposition to the Nazis between 1939 and 1945, and in fact there was evidence of Hitler's genuine popularity.

To do well candidates needed to evaluate the strengths and limitations of the given interpretation while making references to other interpretations. Other interpretations that are considered as part of evaluation and analysis do not need to be attributed to specific named historians, but they must be recognisable historical interpretations, rather than the candidate's own viewpoint.

Question 3

3 Read the interpretation and answer the question that follows.

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Evaluate the strengths and limitations of this interpretation of opposition and resistance in Germany in the period from 1939 to 1945, making reference to other interpretations that you have studied.

[20]

This question elicited a range of responses, with strong responses analysing different interpretations and assessing the strengths and limitations of this interpretation with strong contextual knowledge. Good answers were balanced, analytical and well supported when justifying their response to the interpretation. Strengths of the interpretation were supported by examining continued popularity for Hitler and the war effort, industrial production, and internal morale. Limitations of the interpretation tended to be more numerous and included opposition movements such as the White Rose, the Kreisau Circle, and the Edelweiss Pirates, amongst others. Strong responses discussed the continuing use of the apparatus of terror and propaganda to demonstrate how the regime maintained a façade of popularity in part.

Exemplar 2

To an extent, it's clear that there was ^{much} ~~an~~ evidence of Hitler's genuine popularity. Many historians argue the success of the Nazi regime was not due to support for the Nazi Party but due to support for Hitler himself. ~~Throughout the~~ This is shown through the high morale ~~through~~ despite the allied bombings, decrease in living standards ~~and~~ and it soon becoming clear Germany was losing the war. Allied Rationing was introduced in 1939 ~~and~~ and while initially this did not cause many issues, ~~from~~ by 1943-44, it was resulting in a decrease in living standards and luxuries became banned and some began to starve. Despite this, morale remained high and we do not see a lot of opposition. J. Hite and

J. Hinton were right to say there was 'little opposition', although it did become clear that the decline in living standards did increase disillusionment to the regime. This is further shown from 1943 when allied bombing became more frequent and effective. Instead of the mass destroying of towns such as Hamburg and Dresden. Leading to opposition, it ~~brought~~ ^{brought} Germans closer together and popularity for Hitler remained high. One of the reasons 'Hitler's genuine popularity' remained high was due to the continuous propaganda that portrayed Hitler as omnipotent ~~and~~ a saviour; many German ~~men~~ believed Hitler would achieve his aim of 1000-year-Reich.

This exemplar shows a good response that examines strengths, whilst maintaining a close focus on the interpretation. Stronger responses maintain this focus rather than drift into long passages of contextual knowledge.

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