

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

HISTORY A

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in History A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y220/01 Summer 2025 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 responses 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 series overview

Y220 is one of twenty-four 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.

Both these questions were equally popular among the candidates.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- 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 in the traditional essay question - 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.	- considered only one of the two issues in the short answer essay 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 traditional essay question - 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.

OCR support



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Question 1 (a) (i) and (ii)

1

(a) Which of the following was the greater problem for Italy during the period from 1896 to 1915?

(i) Industrial action: violence and strikes

(ii) Irredentism

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

[10]

The purpose of this question was for candidates to assess which of these two factors was the greater problem for Italy during the period 1896-1915. Most candidates had sufficient knowledge to address both factors. The more accomplished responses demonstrated a detailed knowledge and understanding of the factors. In particular, some of the responses were generalised in their knowledge of 'industrial action' whereas the more successful responses made references to the Bava Beccaris Massacre 1898 and Red Week in 1914. In respect of 'Irredentism' the more accomplished responses demonstrated a greater understanding of the concept, but some extended their knowledge and analysis to the post war period, which was not relevant to the question.

It would have helped a significant number of candidates if they had given some thought as to what it meant by 'greater problem for Italy'. Did it mean a greater problem for the government or the people?

Assessment for learning



Candidates should always read the question carefully. They should identify the key words and phrases, and it is advisable to use those words throughout a response. This should help to keep an answer focused on the specific demands of the question.

Exemplar 1

		Irredentism was a belief that all
		Italian-speaking provinces of Austro-
		Hungaria should be made part
		of Italy. This was a serious issue as
		in 1882, Italy had joined the Triple
		Alliance with Germany and Austro-Hungaria.
		Giolitti continued to maintain Italian
		alliance to this earlier pact throughout
		the era 1896-1919 and this caused conflict
		with Irredentists who wanted united
		Austria as an enemy not an
		ally. Another factor that made this
		ideology dangerous was, as Bismarck put
		it, the fact Italy had "a big appetite
		but little teeth". Irredentism risked leading
		Italy into conflict with far stronger regional
		powers as Italy lacked mineral wealth and
		industrial capacity for large wars - as
		seen in Adonia in 1896. Irredentism became
		the most potent threat in 1914
		when it led to an intervention crisis
		as they persuaded the government to
		join on the side of the allies after and
		sign the Treaty of London to try and
		gain land from a defeated Austria.
		This indecision and leaving the Triple
		Alliance made the Liberals look weak.

Exemplar 1 is a successful attempt to explain the factor 'Irredentism' in relation to the question. The response attained Level 5.

Question 1 (b)*

(b)* 'Fascist Italy's use of propaganda was its greatest domestic policy success during the period from 1925 to 1940.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

The purpose of the question was for candidates to assess the success of various domestic policies in Italy between 1925 and 1940. The candidates were given the policy of propaganda and were asked to judge this policy's success in relation to other policies of their choice. Most candidates understood the purpose of the question and the differentiating factor was their knowledge and understanding of various domestic policies.

Most candidates were able to give a description of propaganda, but some knowledge was generalised and some responses did not fully appreciate how to judge success. Many candidates used education and the ONB as the focus of their analysis of propaganda but very few candidates offered any counter-arguments that propaganda was not successful, such as there was no Ministry of Propaganda until 1935 and a lack of mass media in the South. Most candidates were able to provide other successful policies such as the successful response to the Great Depression, the Lateran Treaty, and some economic policies, including the Pontine Marshes.

Question 2 (a) (i) and (ii)

2

(a) Which of the following created more problems for Italy during the period from 1915 to 1925?

(i) Italy's conduct in the First World War

(ii) The 'mutilated victory'

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

[10]

Most candidates understood the purpose of this question in that they were being asked to assess which of the two factors created more problems for Italy in the period 1915 to 1925.

In relation to 'Italy's conduct in the First World War', most candidates were able to provide a generalised response to the factors, particularly the economic consequences. However, the more accomplished responses made specific references to the political consequences of Italy joining the war in 1915, the defeat at Caporetto and the victory at Vittorio Veneto. Some candidates provided a good description of the 'mutilated victory' but a significant number of candidates did not fully analyse the problems that these factors created in this period, particularly in the years after the war.

Question 2 (b)*

(b)* 'Italian foreign and colonial policy was largely successful during the period from 1896 to 1915.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

The purpose of the question was for candidates to discuss whether Italy's foreign and colonial policy was largely successful in the period 1896-1915. Some candidates did not show a clear understanding of the difference between foreign policy and colonial policy and, therefore, tended to focus only on colonial policy. Some candidates did not confine themselves to the dates in the question and included knowledge and analysis of foreign and colonial policy after 1918.

A significant number of candidates concentrated on colonial policy and focused their attention on events at Adowa in 1896 and Libya in 1911. More accomplished responses analysed the events of 1914 and 1915 concerning Italy's entry to the First World War and Italy's relations with the other great powers in this period. Also, the more accomplished responses provided a line of argument that focused on arguments for and against 'success' (as seen in Exemplar 2) rather than describing events and adding some analysis at the end.

Misconception



The invasion of Libya in 1911 was only partially successful. In the first three weeks the Italians were able to capture the main ports and the coastal area. The rest of Libya remained outside Italian control.

Exemplar 2

		Italian foreign and colonial policy was also unsuccessful in many ways 1896 1896-1915. The defeat at Adowa in 1896 was internationally
		humiliating for Italy, as it was the first time that European colonial forces were defeat by an African force. Furthermore, during the invasion of Adowa, 5000 Italians were killed and 2000 were wounded, conveying that it was unsuccessful. In addition to this, the 1911 invasion of Libya was unsuccessful in many ways. The invasion resulted in 3500 deaths of Italian soldiers and cost 1300 million lire, indicating a lack of success. Furthermore, by the time Italy gained control of Libya, $\frac{1}{8}$ th of the Libyan population had been killed, meaning the extent of their control was limited, as it was over less people. As well as this, the control of Libya had very limited benefit for Italy, as by 1911, only 2% of Italian trade was with its colonies and it caused the price of wheat to rise for the Italian population, as crops in Libya were largely the same as Italian crops. Additionally, the Libyan invasion resulted in a decrease in trade, and this all serves to highlight the lack of success of Italian foreign and colonial policy as the cost was significant and the benefit was limited. The Libyan war was also unsuccessful in that it resulted in the polarisation of politics, as many socialists

		disagreed with the war, thus moved further left ideologically which therefore pushed the right further right. This made gran trasformismo increasingly difficult. Furthermore, as a result of the Libyan war, the franchise was extended to a literate men over 21 and all men over 30. Whilst initially, this appeared to have a limited impact of on voting patterns, this was only due to the 1913 Gentiloni Pact which, when discovered, resulted in the collapse of gran trasformismo. Therefore, the Libyan war was very unsuccessful for Italy politically, as it led to the collapse of gran trasformismo and divided Italy. Italy's failure to enter world war one in 1914 also indicated a lack of success in terms of foreign and colonial policy. This is because it highlighted the fact that Italy was not on the same level as other great powers, and it resulted in the intervention crisis, which contributed to the rise of individuals such as D'Annunzio and Mussolini. This was a significant failure for the liberals and became a problem for Italy in the 1920s, with the Mussolini's rise to power.
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Exemplar 2 is a successful attempt to provide knowledge and analysis to address the issue of whether the Italian foreign and colonial policy was unsuccessful. This response attained Level 5.

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