

Examiners' report

GCSE

HISTORY B

(SCHOOLS HISTORY PROJECT)

**OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in
History B (Schools History Project)**

J411

For first teaching in 2016

Living under Nazi Rule, 1933–1945

J411/33, J411/36 and J411/39

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.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Living under Nazi Rule, 1933–1945 overview

Living under Nazi Rule, 1933–1945 is one of three World Depth Study units in the Component Group 3 World History GCSE paper. The focus of assessment for the World Depth Study is knowledge and understanding, using sources and understanding interpretations.

The questions in the World Depth Study test all four Assessment Objectives. To do well in the World Depth Study, candidates are required to make relevant inferences from three sources and one interpretation. The extent to which the sources and interpretation were the focus of candidates' answers to Questions 6 and 7 were the main driver of the overall level awarded. Furthermore, candidates need to recall and apply their knowledge to support and challenge a statement in an essay-style question.

For Question 6, candidates performed effectively when they made one or more valid inferences from the source (Source A) and supported these with relevant material from the source. Such candidates received high credit in Level 2, with those who were able to make a 'sophisticated inferences', such as those set out in the indicative content of the mark scheme, being awarded Level 3 (with the final mark in Level 3 being reserved for answers that supported that sophisticated inference with clear details from the source).

For Question 7, candidates performed effectively when they engaged effectively with Sources B, C and Interpretation D and made a valid, supported inference from at least one of them (for Level 4, with Level 5 being awarded for candidates who made inferences from two or more). Another route to Level 5 was for candidates who constructed a 'very clear explanation' from one or the two sources, though this was extremely rare; the vast majority of answers credited in Level 5 came from candidates who made valid supported inferences from at least two of the sources and interpretation.

Answers in Questions 8 and 9 built up credit in the higher levels through explanation. Whichever of these optional questions the candidate chose, these explanations were required for Level 3 and higher. Strong answers were able to identify relevant examples for the question, support these with appropriate detail and then make an explicit analytical link to the question (whether the Nazis successfully influenced controlled the lives of young people in Germany for Question 8 or whether people in Nazi-occupied Europe resisted Nazi rule in Question 9). Candidates who were able to offer at least two explanations for one side of the argument (supporting or challenging the statement in the question) and one explanation for the other side could access Level 5, and Level 6 opened up for those who offered an additional explanation for either side of the argument. The final mark in Level 6 was reserved for those candidates who were able to reach a nuanced understanding of the question and offer a 'clinching argument'.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- used Source A effectively to make one or more supported inferences that addressed the question - made a valid inference from at least one of Sources B, C and Interpretation D (for Question 7) and support these with clear details from the sources or interpretation - for Question 8, used clear evidence relevant to the lives of young people in Germany between 1933 and 1945 in order to make explicit statements assessing whether the Nazis were successful in controlling their lives	- misinterpreted Source A (for example around the comment 'bitter April fools' joke') rather than making valid inferences from it, or used the source as a prompt to describe what they knew about Nazi expansion in the 1930s (Question 6) - for Question 7, produced a general commentary on the sources and interpretation rather than identifying what they revealed about the Nazi dictatorship, or misinterpreted the sources and interpretation (for example claiming that Source B was Nazi propaganda)

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
for Question 9, deploying evidence specific to countries in Nazi-occupied Eastern and Western Europe in order to make explicit assessments of whether they resisted Nazi rule.	- wrote in more general terms about Nazi policies in Question 8 rather than those directly intended for young people, or wrote narrative accounts of the lives of young people without making an explicit assessment of whether the Nazis successfully controlled them - for Question 9, wrote generally about resistance to Nazi occupation without specific examples, or misinterpreted the question and offered material focused on why people in Nazi-occupied Europe resisted their rule.

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Question 6

6 What can **Source A** tell us about Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1936?

Use the source and your own knowledge to support your answer.

[7]

As in previous years, Questions 6 and 7 test candidates' ability to work with contemporary sources as professional historians do. Central to this involves candidates thinking about what sources may reveal to historians about a given issue. Candidates who make valid inferences in relation to the question asked are rewarded in Levels 2 and 3, with higher marks awarded to those who support their inferences with clear support from the source. Given the highly 'open' nature of the question this year ('Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1936') and the range of information Source A provided candidates, many candidates performed well and made valid, supported inferences.

Common inferences credited in Level 2 included the support for Hitler/the Nazis that Source A revealed, the anti-Semitic action being taken in this period, the influence of Nazi propaganda on the German people, and the popularity of Nazi policies to strengthen Germany. Of these, support for Hitler was most frequently seen.

There were several routes candidates could take to be credited in Level 3, as set out in the indicative content of the mark scheme. Of these, by far the most common 'sophisticated inference' was that the source revealed support for the Nazis despite the anti-Semitic policies that affected close family members. Each element of that example was required for Level 3 credit (for example a response that acknowledged anti-Semitism but without pinning this to the impact on a close family member would remain in Level 2).

Less effective responses included candidates who lifted detail from the source and attempted to use this to answer the question (though without making a valid inference) and those who described the source – or provided a commentary on it – without addressing the question. These answers were awarded Level 1 (with the higher mark in Level 1 credited for the former example). Some candidates misinterpreted the source (for example that Solmitz found the Nazis' anti-Semitism amusing, or that the source revealed Solmitz was a victim of Nazi terror) and this was not credited.

Exemplar 1

		Source A tells us about the persecution Jews faced under Nazi leadership. The diary states "the boycott of Jewish shops was a bitter apink food joke". This quotation highlights how the Nazis encouraged the hatred of Jews and antisemitism through a nationwide boycott. It also states how Jews were "excluded from the SA", again highlighting antisemitic laws and practices within Germany. However despite the persecution of her husband, the Luise still admires Hitler. The quote shows "I was completely overawed by the moment and greatness of Hitler", during the marching of the Rhineland. Demonstrating how many Germans supported the Nazi ideology of 'living space'.
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This response was credited with the most commonly seen 'sophisticated inference' (for Level 3) and is a good example of the route many candidates took. The first part of the paragraph was credited with Level 2: a valid, supported inference of the persecution of Jewish people in Nazi Germany in this period. The second part then qualifies that by inferring the author's support ('admiration') of Hitler despite the impact of anti-Semitic persecution on her husband. There is clear support from the source for this inference, and so the candidate was given the higher mark in Level 3 (7).

Question 7

- 7 How useful are **Sources B** and **C** and **Interpretation D** for a historian studying the Nazi dictatorship in 1934?

In your answer, refer to the two sources and the interpretation as well as your own knowledge.

[15]

Many candidates made effective use of the two sources and the interpretation, and made sound inferences from at least one of them. To be credited with a valid inference, candidates must clearly address the question rather than merely provide a commentary on the source/interpretation with accompanying description. Such answers were credited in Level 1. For inferences, examiners were looking for explicit statements that answered the question of 'how useful', such as 'this tells us...this is useful because...this can reveal to an historian...this shows...'. Candidates are encouraged to make it clear that their answers are addressing the question set.

Valid inferences from the sources/interpretation were credited in Level 3, with relevant support moving the award to Level 4 (Level 5 if there were inferences from more than one source/interpretation). While Level 5 could also be achieved from constructing a 'very clear explanation' of why either or both Sources B and C are useful for an historian studying the Nazi dictatorship in 1934 – and the indicative content of the mark scheme sets out the test for this – these answers were very rare indeed, and the vast majority of candidates receiving Level 5 credit did so from making two or more supported inferences from the sources and interpretation.

For Source B, the most common inference made was that the source reveals to an historian how brutal the Nazi dictatorship was, though many valid inferences were also seen regarding the criticism of the dictatorship the source reveals (see Exemplar 2). For Source C, the most common inference made was that the source shows that the dictatorship was keen to justify its actions during the Night of the Long Knives, but several variants of this were also seen (such as to defend or excuse their actions). While most candidates making valid inferences from Interpretation D did so through considering the source as useful for showing the dictatorship gained the army's support as a consequence of the Night of the Long Knives, others did so by considering how the SA were weakened as a result, or that the interpretation revealed the dictatorship's aims for the event (to gain the army's support or to weaken the SA).

Although many strong answers were seen, examiners also noted that other candidates produced answers that were less effective, either because answers commented on the sources rather than making inferences from them (see above), because the sources or interpretation were misinterpreted (for example considering Source B as Nazi propaganda) or because candidates used the sources as prompts for what they knew about the Nazi dictatorship. Others made assertions about the 'purpose' of the sources but in an isolated manner rather than considering what that reveals about the source/interpretation's usefulness to an historian for the question set. Candidates are encouraged to consider the sources and the question as they find them rather than trying to apply a learned format. Centres could aid candidates by exposing them to the widest range of contemporary material possible when preparing them for the examination.

Addressing both sources and the interpretation in Question 7



Examiners noted that a significant number of candidates wrote answers that covered only two of the three sources and interpretation. While time management in an examination is a challenge for many candidates, this approach is potentially damaging. While it is possible for candidates to reach Level 5 by making two inferences across the three sources and interpretation, there is little leeway for potential misunderstanding and misinterpretation of one if only two of the three are covered. Given that this is a high tariff question – and it is possible to make a valid supported inference without excessive infrastructure – candidates are encouraged to address both sources and the interpretation in their answer.

Exemplar 2

7.		Source B tells me that criticism of
		the Nazi party was very apparent in
		places outside of Germany. This can be
		seen as when the German soldier
		lays down on the floor, saluting

exclaiming 'Heil Hitler!' which demonstrates a cruel sense of irony and almost mocking the Nazi regime. As even with undoubted loyalty and years of service that the SA ~~is~~ showed to Hitler Hitler did not hesitate to have them executed in cold blood. The ~~passage~~ ^{providence} of Source A could be interpreted as one ~~a~~ that to mock the cruel irony that the Nazi regime deliberated in, uncaring and callous even to its own soldiers, Heartfield heavily criticising the Nazi regime ~~for~~ from his outside perspective in Czechoslovakia.

Source C tells me that within the Nazi occupied Germany, they are attempting very deliberately to ^{justify} ~~approve~~ of their act of brutality during ~~that~~ the Night of the Long Knives. This can be seen when Source C says, "the measures take on ~~the~~ ^{the} 30 June, 1 July and 2 July... are justifiable legal acts of the state," which demonstrates Hitler and the Nazi governments desire to control the public narrative, labelling their actions as "justified" and "legal" to control this narrative of the Nazi government decisions.

		only acts out of fairness and self defence
		to mask their true desire of total power
		and control. The provision of Source A
		could be interpreted as the Nazi
		government attempting to manipulate
		and indoctrinate the German citizens,
		by hiding them off the criticism faced
		by other European countries.

Most commonly, candidates were given Level 4 credit from Sources B and C, and this response is a good example of an answer which successfully does so from both and so was awarded Level 5 (at the top of the level). The candidate makes a clear inference of the critical nature of Source B – supported with clear details of Heartfield's image – and then offers a similarly valid supported inference for C (that the source shows the Nazis' keenness to justify the actions taken during the Night of the Long Knives).

Question 8*

8* 'The Nazis were successful in influencing and controlling the lives of young people in Germany.'

How far do you agree?

Give reasons for your answer.

[18]

Of the two optional essay questions, this was by far the most common; answers to Question 9 were relatively rare. When agreeing with the statement in the question, candidates most commonly used material rooted in the Hitler Youth and changes to the school curriculum. Material commonly used to disagree with the statement related to various youth opposition groups (frequently the Swing Youth or Edelweiss Pirates) and the limited engagement with Nazi policies to young people during the war such as the KLV programme. Candidates found explanatory links to the Nazis' lack of control and influence more straightforward to construct than assessments of their control and influence.

Less effective answers omitted one of the key components of an explanation (usually supportive evidence: frequently the Hitler Youth was identified as a valid example of control/influence but there was little development of the role of HJ organisations) and such answers – together with wholly narrative accounts – were limited to Level 2. Other candidates offered material that considered general Nazi control in Germany rather than issues specifically relevant to young people and these were credited in Level 1 if implicitly relevant (such as terror or propaganda) or received no credit if they could not be connected to young people (such as the KDF).

Exemplar 3

8		I mostly disagree with the statement, although some things like the changes to education and the Hitler Youth were successful.
		One way that the Nazis controlled the lives of young people was through the Hitler Youth. This became mandatory in 1936 but prior to this had been the only way for young people to get access to facilities such as stadiums and swimming pools, making it very popular. Young people sang songs about Hitler and the strength of Germany, went on camps and were given educated on physical health and fitness. Because it was mandatory, every child in Germany would have had some exposure to Nazi ideals and beliefs, showing the success of their attempt to influence and indoctrinate young people into the Nazi regime.
		However, there was also a lot of youth opposition, particularly from groups such as the swing kids and the Edelweiss pirates. The swing kids rejected the Nazi

image of what young people should do and look like so resisted by doing things like listening to swing and jazz music (called 'un-German' by the Nazis) and dress in a more modern, less traditional way. The Edelweiss pirates were formed in the Rhine-Ruhr region and went on camps to sing anti-Nazi songs and attack Hitler Youth groups. They were considered a serious problem, and the Gestapo rounded up and hung the 12 'ring leaders'. ~~Opp~~ Direct opposition such as this as well as a rejection of indoctrination into Nazi beliefs shows how little control the Nazis had over German young people.

Changes to the education system also helped spread Nazi views to young people. By 1936 all teachers had to join the Nazi Teachers League (97% did so or they would be removed) and Jewish teachers and children were moved to separate Jewish schools. Children were taught about the racial supremacy of Aryans and there was a strong emphasis on physical activity - the Nazis were trying to create future soldiers and mothers, not an educated generation. New schools like Napola and Adolf Hitler ~~se~~ schools were set up to with a focus on ideology, although only 6,000 students actually enrolled in them. The focus on

		education meant that many children grew up blindly believing and supporting Nazi policy as it was sub a undercurrent throughout their entire learning experience.
		Not all Nazi programmes for youth were met with enthusiasm, however. After the RAF began the bombing campaign on major German cities, there were around 3 to 4 air raids a week and the cities weren't safe. In response the Nazis set up the TLU programme, which gave children under 14 the chance to spend a 6 month stay in the German countryside (mostly from Berlin and Hamburg). Although under 10s would be accompanied by their mother, older children would live in Hitler Youth camps. Many are didn't want their children exposed to this level of indoctrination, so of the 260,000 eligible children only 60,000 went. This shows how not all attempts to control the lives and beliefs were successful overall.
		In general, I mostly disagree with the statement because although some programmes like the Hitler Youth were successful, it can be argued that before it was required people only joined for the facilities it provided, and the wide spread youth opposition to the Nazi regime demonstrates Hitler's lack of control of the lives of young people.

This is a relatively long response, but useful for centres to consider as it contains much of the most common material advanced by candidates. In each paragraph the candidate identifies a valid issue, supports this with specific evidence (such as the HJ's monopoly of sporting facilities) and makes a clear assessment of whether this resulted in Nazi control/influence of young people's lives. With two explanations supporting and two challenging the statement, the answer was given Level 6 and awarded the full 18 marks as there is a clear assessment of relative control that was limited by the presence of coercion, incentives and the presence of a range of youth opposition, all of which had been preciously touched upon by the candidate in their answer.

Question 9*

9* 'People living under Nazi occupation in eastern and western Europe resisted Nazi rule.'

How far do you agree?

Give reasons for your answer.

[18]

Answers to Question 9 were not frequent, but many candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the material and were able to provide clear examples of country-specific responses to Nazi occupation and make assessments of whether this constituted resistance (or collaboration). These answers were credited in Level 3 and higher.

When agreeing with the statement, candidates frequently referred to Polish resistance such as the Warsaw Rising, resistance in France (such as the actions of Trocmé) and the Dutch reaction to occupation later in the war. Some of these were accompanied with highly detailed exemplification and clear explanatory links to the question. When challenging the statement, answers commonly referred to collaborationist activities in Croatia, Greece and France, and the case study of Coco Chanel also appeared regularly in answers.

Although many candidates who chose to answer Question 9 were clearly well prepared and produced effective answers, others were restricted to Level 2 because their accounts were narrative and lacked explicit statements about why the actions described in their answers constituted resistance (or collaboration). Other candidates drifted away from the question and considered why people resisted, or considered material inside Germany itself, and this was not credited. Some candidates wrote about resistance in general terms without specific examples or activities in particular countries, and such material could only be credited in Level 1.

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