



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS2M

Report on the Examination

2009 examination – June series

This Report on the Examination uses the [new numbering system](#)

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

Unit HIS2M

Unit 2M: Life in Nazi Germany, 1933–1945

General Comments

There were nearly 3000 candidates for the first summer examination and it was pleasing to record that there many successful scripts. Compared to the inaugural January paper, where many candidates lacked real depth and balance to their answers, the June cohort seemed well prepared. The great majority of candidates had revised well, were organised and their time management was good. A pleasing feature was the ability by many candidates to construct a balanced essay and develop a line of argument in approximately 30 minutes. In terms of question selection, there was little imbalance in candidate choice between optional Questions 2 and 3.

There were many high quality scripts which were succinct, well-supported by evidence; candidates seemed equally competent when either dealing with a source material question or constructing an essay.

Question 1

Question 01

Overall there were many good answers to this question and candidates were able to demonstrate their skills of comparison using Sources A and B. There were some candidates who simply paraphrased the two sources or only compared at a basic, literal level but the vast majority got into Level 3 by using appropriate own knowledge to support the differences and also by highlighting the provenance of Sources A and B.

Good candidates recognised the different dates of the sources and often used own knowledge to show how this might influence an understanding of difference. Others noted the tone and language of the sources and began to examine the provenance, particularly of Source A. A majority of candidates were aware of the role of censorship and how it might influence recorded events. Sophisticated answers recognised similarities. This was important as the question is asking 'how far' and it is assumed that candidates will not simply look for differences. Some candidates claimed that both sources were perceptions from small town/village backgrounds; others cleverly examined the nature of 'sacrifice' – willing or unwilling – and the whole nature of conformity itself.

There was a good amount of Level 4 answers which combined differences with similarities and provenance and they used own knowledge in supporting the comparison between the sources. Weaker candidates had a tendency to write everything they knew about German attitudes towards the Nazi regime, whether the information had any appropriate relevance or not.

Question 02

There were some very well crafted answers to this question. The best utilised all three sources and were able to use own knowledge to evaluate the level and degree of loyalty the Nazi regime received by 1939. The sources offered a good amount of assistance in assessing the question. In fact some candidates used Source C as a form of template as it offered a variety of viewpoints. They were able to show that:

- many supporters were full of enthusiasm and devotion
- others were noisy supporters of a system they did not necessarily believe in
- others went along out of agreement, not fear
- some supported as their expectations and beliefs were met to some extent.

Source C also concludes by suggesting that the Nazi regime may have received support through actual ideological belief, or via political education or self interest. Many candidates were also able to link Sources A and B into their essay by highlighting the attitudes of a range of people. There were some really excellent scripts which avoided stereotyping or generalisation and examined a variety of groups such as women, workers and peasants, the churches, the elites, the military etc. Whilst it was not essential to examine every group, those who avoided bland generalisations scored very high marks. The best essays used recent research to show that there were many Germans who did support the regime and that, contrary to Source B, they were not all living in fear. Subtle answers differentiated the loyalty shown to the regime as opposed to the loyalty to Hitler. Some answers pointed out that it was quite difficult to assess public opinion towards the Nazis, given the constraints of a totalitarian regime.

Candidates need to note that they must use both the sources and own knowledge if they are to get into Level 3 and above. Some candidates used prepared answers, often of a high conceptual quality, but only got to the top of Level 2 as they did not use any sources. Likewise, candidates must not simply paraphrase what the three sources say and offer little else. Candidates must also be careful with the timeframe. Some candidates went well past 1939. They will receive no credit for this.

Question 2**Question 03**

This question was answered very well. Most candidates got into Level 3 and were able to point out that Hitler's actions were not simply vengeful and an attempt to settle old scores. Hitler clearly needed to placate the vested interests of the elites and the army. Most suggested it was Hitler's attempt to gain control but many offered a good range of possibilities. These usually included:

- Hitler's desire to stop Rohm integrating the SA and army
- His desire to remove Schleicher and Strasser
- He wanted to end the internal party conflict
- He wanted to assume the presidency without any opposition.

Clearly Rohm featured in most answers but it was important for students to stop after explaining 'why' and not waste time describing the actual events surrounding Rohm's death. Candidates should always aim to try and offer at least three reasons 'why' in their answers and to achieve a good level, they must show some linkage between them and possibly prioritise some of the reasons.

Question 04

This question produced a good range of answers and there were many candidates who used this question to demonstrate their knowledge of the period. Many candidates were able to define 'totalitarian' and their subsequent essays were often full of balance and evidence. There were some candidates who wrote a narrative of the period but these were in the minority. It was pleasing to see the level of argument in many essays. Many argued that, even if such a state did not exist by the end of 1934, many of the component parts were present and a nascent dictatorship was in progress. Furthermore, they not only were able to list the key legislative acts which allowed Hitler to move towards dictatorship, but also utilise them in their argument. Good answers as always challenged the premise of the question and many answers were able to demonstrate levels of opposition and activity against the Nazis to confirm this. They noted the early role of Gleichschaltung and how it had some impact on social and cultural life but they also pointed out that the churches, big business and the army were far from controlled by 1934.

There were candidates whose work tended to be uncritical and their answers simply agreed with the question but they were in the minority. At the other end of the spectrum there were many Level 5 answers which differentiated between one party state and totalitarian and pursued a line of argument to show that the army was still not totally behind Hitler, despite an oath of loyalty, and that the Nazis never actually established a centralised command control over the economy. Sophisticated answers highlighted the fact that the Third Reich was an alliance of different blocs and there were many structural problems within the state. A superficial veneer of efficiency and violence could not hide levels of chaos. Candidates on occasion went much further than the end of 1934 and, unless it involved a contextual point, it was of no value. Candidates must try and keep to the timeframe in the question set.

Question 3**Question 05**

This was a popular question and it elicited rather more generalised reasons behind the promotion of youth organisations, compared to Question 03. Nevertheless this often resulted in answers which were 'written as a piece' and included more than three reasons.

Candidates usually highlighted some of the following:

- The older generation were hard to indoctrinate; the youth were much easier to mould
- Youth were the future of the 1000 Year Reich
- Membership allowed the Nazis to do a lot of gender training
- This involved getting boys ready for war
- To counter any other youth organisations, such as the Catholic Church
- To promote the ideology of National Socialism for future survival
- To Nazify the state

Some candidates went too far and started to actually describe the education system under the Nazi regime and many of the activities of the youth organisations. It is essential candidates stick to answering 'why' and not resort to simple narrative or description.

Question 06

This was a broad question deliberately set in contrast to the two year focus of Question 03. Perhaps some chose this question believing it to be an 'easier' option to Question 03 but in reality it was just as challenging. Many did answer it quite well but centres need to ensure that answering questions in generalities should be avoided. Clearly the best candidates were very well prepared and had a good range of statistical evidence to back up their judgements on whether the aims of the policy in this sphere had been achieved. It may be useful for centres to use page 297 of Hite and Hinton's *Weimar and Nazi Germany* textbook to examine the nature and success of Nazi policy towards women. Topics centred on 'groups' in society require teaching to be specific, especially on a depth study paper and should avoid any generalised comparisons with modern day feminist viewpoints. Most candidates were good at flagging up aims but some of the responses to achievement varied in accuracy. Candidates were all able to note the contradiction of wartime demands which resulted in some women returning to work. Likewise Nazi emphasis on births, marriage, education and welfare. However, there was some evaluation of their actual achievements which lacked precision. For example:

- the birth rate rose, then slowly declined
- marriages rose but so did divorces
- there was a drop in women at university
- the number of women in work actually rose.

Very good candidates challenged the premise of the question and showed that, in terms of opportunities between 1933 and 1939, Nazi policies towards women were governed first by the labour market, secondly by consideration of public morale; and finally by Nazi ideology – which was in fact not inflexible. The Nazis accepted women's employment as long as it fell under the heading 'national occupations'. The best answers involved an awareness of differentiation between classes and highlighted the fact that not all women longed for Kinder, Kuche and Kirche and to be subservient. It was pleasing to note that most essays did try and focus on the question and evaluate for achievement. There were few essays which only produced a narrative of the period under study.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.