



# Examiners' Report

## Principal Examiner Feedback

History

Pearson Edexcel Advanced

Paper 1: Breadth study with interpretations

Option 1G: Germany and West Germany,

c1918–89

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October 2020

Publications Code 9HI0\_1G\_pef\_20201217

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### **Question 1.**

Question 1 asked candidates to consider whether opposition to democracy in the years 1918-23 was different from opposition to democracy in the years 1930-33. This was the more popular question in Section A, and candidates were generally able to organise their response to meet the needs of the second order concept of similarity / difference. The majority of answers were in level three or above. At the bottom end answers tended to be unbalanced, describing events in the earlier period at length, and not offering anything much on the later period. This prevented a comparative analysis and left the criteria needed to answer the question implicit. At level three candidates tended to cover the two periods without maintaining their focus on 'opposition to democracy', e.g. by explaining the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Nevertheless many candidates reached levels four and five, with the more successful candidates operating around the rather obvious fact that opposition to democracy in the later period proved fatal. A minority of candidates unpicked the nature of the opposition and tied it to the context of the period, e.g. Hitler being able to gain support for his ruthless attitude to Communists in the context of the Great depression in the later period.

### **Question 2.**

Question 2 asked candidates to consider whether cultural policies, in the years 1933-45, were created mainly to support Nazi racial theories. This was the less popular question in Section A, and candidates struggled with its demands. The second order concept is causation ('were created mainly to'). The stated factor candidates were asked to focus on was cultural policies and what lay behind them. The question invited candidates to write about the celebration of German art, music, architecture, film, and literature by the Nazis, and to show how some of this was to support racist views, e.g. in film, poster art or considering so-called degenerate art. Other reasons behind cultural policies could have been to create a sense (exaggerated) of German greatness, or to bolster support for Hitler. However, candidates overwhelmingly thought that cultural policies referred to social policies. Therefore candidates provided detail on policies affecting women, education and Jews, and hardly mentioned culture at all. This trapped the majority who answered this question in levels two or three.

### **Question 3.**

Question 3 asked candidates to consider whether the Second World War was a turning point in Germany's economic development, in the years 1918-89. This was the more popular question in Section B, and it was generally well done. Using 'turning point' in the question is a shorthand way of considering change and continuity as a second order concept. At the bottom end candidates did not engage with change and continuity and instead compared the Second World War to other turning points. In level two this generally meant writing about an economic period that the candidate knew about, e.g. the hyperinflation of 1923. At level three there was usually an attempted comparison of economic features before and after the war, thereby attempting to establish the criteria by which the question could be answered, but not considering change and continuity as such. The majority of candidates achieved level 4, although more often than not they focussed on change rather than continuity. However, at the top end some candidates established economic continuity, e.g. in high-tech electronic manufacturing, throughout the period. This gave answers balance and enabled substantiated evaluation.

### **Question 4.**

Question 4 asked candidates to consider whether political persuasion by governments was the most significant reason for their getting public support, in the years 1933-89. Candidates answering this question did well on the whole. Political persuasion was often defined in the introduction to include propaganda and coercion. There were some well-reasoned arguments about government propagandists being able to spin events to garner support, e.g. by the Nazis and Erhard around job creation and miraculous economic turnarounds. At the top end there was good understanding shown of the subtleties of coercion by governments who banned parties, outlawed certain ideologies and often did not have to resort to all out terror. At the bottom end there was a lack of balance with most of the evidence being around terror under the Nazis, but this was a small minority. In the middle order the argument was that the Nazis used terror, and the governments of the FRG used persuasion. At level three this argument was asserted and thereby the criteria needed to answer the question was attempted. However, where the argument was developed candidates, on the whole, had little difficulty reaching level four and above.

### **Question 5.**

Question 5 asked candidates to use the extracts and their own knowledge to consider the view that Hitler was personally responsible for the outbreak of war in 1939. Successful candidates centred their answers on the different interpretations that the extracts offered. The interpretation in extract 1, that Hitler's personal role, and in particular his misunderstanding of British foreign, contrasted with the interpretation in extract 2. Extract 2 offered the view that Hitler was merely a spokesman for wider German interests who wanted war as a solution to Germany's problems. At the top end candidates selected information from their own knowledge to debate the merits of the interpretations. The vast majority of candidates know how to go about answering Section C questions now. Some go through the extracts in turn, but the better ones compare points of interpretation between the extracts. Less successful candidates picked out points from the extracts which provided some comparison, e.g. the reference to Hitler's misunderstanding of British interests in extract 1 and the reference to the role of the German army in extract 2. A minority used the extracts to prompt their own knowledge and offered an explanation of the causes of war rather than an evaluation of the interpretations.

