



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

History

Pearson Edexcel Advanced

Option 2G.1: The rise and fall of fascism in Italy, c1911-46

Option 2G.2: Spain, 1930-78: republicanism, Francoism, and the re-establishment of democracy

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Introduction

It is recommended that centres should refer to previous Principal Examiner reports to achieve a more rounded view of what is typical performance in this paper. This examination series has taken place under exceptional circumstances and the comments in this report are based on a significantly smaller entry than is usual.

A Level paper 9HI02G deals with the rise and fall of fascism in Italy, c1911-46 (2G.1), and Spain, 1930-78, republicanism, Francoism and the re-establishment of democracy (2G.2).

The paper is divided into three sections. Section A contains a compulsory question which is based on two enquiries linked to one source. It assesses source analysis and evaluation skills (AO2). Section B comprises a choice of essays that assess understanding of the period in depth (AO1) by targeting five second order concepts - cause, consequence, change and continuity, similarity and difference, and significance. Section C comprises a choice of essays that relate to aspects of the process of change over a period of at least 100 years (AO1). Most candidates appeared to organise their time effectively and there was little evidence of candidates being unable to attempt all three sections of the paper within the time allocated.

The candidates' performance on individual questions is considered in the next section.

Question 1

The majority of candidates were entered for Option 2G.1 and answered this question. Most candidates achieved levels 3 and 4 with a small number achieving into level 5. Candidates were familiar with the circumstances of Mussolini's fall in 1943, although a couple of candidates did get confused with the events of 1945 and consequently drew on contextual knowledge related to Mussolini's problems in ruling the Republic of Salò which was not relevant to this question.

The most effective responses made good use of the source material to explore the inferences that could be drawn from Source 1 regarding Mussolini's naivety in his response to Dini Grandi's resolution and the inadequacy of Mussolini's response and the claims made in Source 2 regarding Mussolini's alliance with Hitler. Many candidates made good use of contextual knowledge to interrogate the inferences and claims made as part of the evaluation of the sources. However, some candidate picked up on the references to the king in source 1 and became side-tracked by providing lengthy descriptions of the March on Rome and the role of Victor Emmanuel III rather than keeping focused on the constitutional powers exercised by the king in 1943. The best responses engaged with the source material effectively to explore the validity of inferences that could be drawn in the light of contextual knowledge. Candidates achieving in levels 4 and 5 interrogate the sources by using context to confirm and

challenge claims and then use this as the basis for attaching weight to the sources. At levels 3 and below, candidates tend to match relevant context to content and inferences but do not really use it to justify judgements. Most candidates were able to provide some discussion on the strength and limitations of the two sources. There was some good evaluation considering the different nature of the sources and hence the differing messages they propounded. Most candidates were able to comment on the sources as a package and there were some very good responses that compared the different nature of the source and considered the relative merits of an inside and outside opinion.

Question 2

There were only two candidates for 2G.2 in this October series. Candidates demonstrated that they could comprehend the source material and draw out inferences from it about the position of women in Spain in the specified time period. Both candidates were aware of the different nature of the two sources and were able to comment on the differing views within the sources. Neither answer really interrogated the material but candidates did attempt to evaluate using the differing opinions of the authors to support their conclusions.

Question 3

This was the most popular essay question on the paper. The majority of candidates were well informed on the topic and achieved marks in level 4 with some candidates scoring in level 5. Candidates were able to explain the impact of the invasion of Libya on Giolitti's control of government. Many candidates analysed the impact in the light of the rise of the Nationalists and Socialists and particularly with reference to the extension of the franchise in 1912. Fewer candidates used the rise of the Catholics in Italian politics and the Gentiloni Pact as a counter point to the impact of the invasion of Libya. The most successful responses had clear criteria for judging the relative significance of the factors in relation to the impact of the invasion of Libya. More candidates tended to look at the range of possible factors that undermined Giolitti's control of government and assert significance rather than develop the criteria that would enable a supported judgement. This approach is necessary for candidates aiming to achieve a secure level 5 mark.

Question 4

About a third of the candidates chose to answer this question. Most candidates were well informed about the methods used by the fascists to attract support in the specified time period and achieved in levels 3 and 4 with a smaller number of well-crafted responses scoring in level 5. The best responses were clearly focused on the second-order concept, change and continuity, and were able to compare the 1919 programme with the

New Programme of 1921. Most candidates discussed the continuous use of violence with the change to the dual policy in 1921, and the more socialist-leaning ideas of 1919 with the lurch to the right in subsequent years. A few candidates wandered out of the specified date range and into Mussolini's rule in Italy and this material could not be credited. Those candidates who were able successfully to tackle the qualifying statement 'completely' and develop a supported judgement were likely to achieve level 5.

Question 5

There were 2 responses to this question scoring in levels 4 and 5. Candidates were well informed on the problems of the Second Republic and focused on the second-order concept, causation. Candidates were able to consider the opposition to the army reform and counterbalance the argument with reference to the agricultural reforms, policy towards the Catalans and policy towards the Catholic Church.

Question 6

There were no responses to this question.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

Section A

- Candidates should aim to draw out reasoned and developed inferences that go beyond comprehension of the sources.
- Contextual knowledge should be used to illuminate and discuss what is in the source, rather than provide an answer to the enquiry. Material that is clearly beyond the scope of the enquiries is unlikely to be credited.
- Evaluation of the source should be linked to the enquiries and should amount to more than merely repeating what is in the captions.

Section B

- Candidates should identify the correct conceptual focus of the question.
- Candidates should avoid a narrative/descriptive approach; this undermines the analysis that is required for the higher levels.
- Candidates must be aware of key dates, as identified in the specification, so that they can address questions with chronological precision.

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