



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS2K

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – January series

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2010 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

Unit HIS2K

Unit 2K: A New Roman Empire? Mussolini's Italy, 1922–1945

General Comments

The overall quality of response from candidates was secure and convincing. Most candidates made effective use of the time available and gave appropriate attention to all four questions they attempted. Standards of presentation and the quality of written communication were usually good, although a minority of candidates relied upon loosely-expressed and generalised assertion. Most candidates showed a healthy determination to maintain relevance to the question, avoiding rigid factual description for its own sake. The work of the best candidates was impressively focused and well balanced.

Question 1

Although many candidates dealt with this question extremely well, there were several ways in which candidates under-achieved. Many answers to Question 1(a) failed to maintain a sufficiently direct focus on comparison. Other answers were very uncritical and literal in handling the evidence of the sources and did not 'pair' selected evidence appropriately. A number of candidates attempted to use own knowledge but failed to apply their material to the comparison of the sources. There was also a tendency to indulge in stock, 'all-purpose' speculation about the provenance of the sources – such an approach usually achieved little.

In Question 1(b), many apparently able and well-equipped students wasted marks by failing to make use of the sources at all. Others tried to build their answer by including all the evidence of the three sources in turn, with little own knowledge and without convincing links to the question. A selective approach, *using* evidence from the sources and from own knowledge to develop a balanced answer to the specific question, would have been much more productive.

- (a) Answers to Question 1(a), on attitudes towards the regime in the later 1930s, were mostly very sound, with an appropriate balance between differences and similarities and worthy attempts to use own knowledge of the context. It was pleasing that so many candidates were able to differentiate between the evidence of the sources according to chronology, showing how Thompson's evidence in Source A was very different from that of the police report in Source B in relation to the situation in 1936 but in agreement about the public mood by 1938.
- (b) In Question 1(b), on the success of the Fascist regime in dealing with the Great Depression in the 1930s, answers were of mixed quality. There were many well-informed answers able to apply their knowledge of the Corporate State and institutions such as IMI and IRI to a balanced assessment of the extent of success or failure – sometimes in the light of effective comparisons between Italy and the situation in other countries. Such answers were often able to use precisely selected evidence from the sources to support their judgements. Many weaker answers showed a limited grasp of chronology and included generalized descriptive material about the economic battles of the 1920s without making relevant links to the economic situation during the depression. Candidates need to be reminded that the key dates in a question are just as important as any key words; they must be addressed directly and material prepared beforehand must be adapted to address the specific question set.

Question 2

- (a) In Question 2(a), on the Lateran Pacts of 1929, most answers were based on sound knowledge of Mussolini's relationships with the Catholic Church and were focused on explaining the motives behind the compromise reached in 1929. A number of candidates discriminated effectively between the situation in 1929 and longer-term factors from the early 1920s. It was disappointing, however, that so many candidates were tempted into writing about the results of the Lateran Pacts after the event. Questions of this nature are specifically targeted at explanation of motives and causation – any discussion of the consequences will always be of little relevance or value.
- (b) Answers to Question 2(b), on Mussolini's compromises with the traditional ruling elites during his consolidation of power, frequently showed secure understanding of a range of other factors, including the use of terror and intimidation, the role of ideology and propaganda, and Mussolini's skilful control of the disparate elements in his Fascist movement. The aspect in which many otherwise impressive answers fell short, however, was in *defining* the elites. Many candidates relied on general statements, referring only to the King, or perhaps mentioning the Catholic Church. Only a minority of answers showed grasp of specific elements within the elites, such as the army, industrialists and southern landowners.

Question 3

It was pleasing that approximately as many candidates attempted this foreign policy question as Question 2 on the consolidation of power in the 1920s – and that the standards of performance were comparable. This reinforced the impression that the great majority of candidates were thoroughly prepared to deal with the specification as a whole.

- (a) Answers to Question 3(a), on the invasion of Abyssinia in 1935, were mostly based on confident knowledge and understanding. Many candidates were able to explain a range of three or more reasons, often combining short-term 'trigger' factors (such as the Wal Wal incident) with longer-term issues such as Fascist ideology and the wish to wipe away the humiliation of the defeat at Adowa in 1896. The one serious weakness in answering this question was exhibited by the surprisingly high number of candidates who were tempted into irrelevant accounts of the later diplomatic consequences of the invasion.
- (b) In Question 3(b) on foreign policies in the years 1936 to 1940 and Mussolini's 'fear of Hitler', many candidates were able to show convincing depth of knowledge and understanding but other answers were of variable quality. Too many candidates ignored the key dates and included irrelevant material. Others showed an insecure grasp of chronology and credited Mussolini with attitudes towards Hitler in 1936 that in fact only developed later. A substantial minority of weaker answers relied on vague, inaccurate evidence and unsupported assertion.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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