



**General Certificate of Education
January 2012**

History 1041

Unit HIS2K

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS2K

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

General Comments

The examination paper was an effective discriminator as there was an array of responses which varied from the lowest to the highest levels. Many scripts clearly reflected an enthusiasm for the subject and an understanding of the main themes regarding Mussolini's Italy. Student answers clearly illustrated a more developed understanding of examination technique, particularly for question 01 the source comparison and for questions 03 and 05 the 12 mark why responses. Precise use of evidence is still a concern for examiners who mark this paper. Students must support their answers with factual evidence; it is not unreasonable to ask that a secure understanding of chronology is required for Levels 4 and 5. Questions 2 and 3 were equally popular. However, students tended to produce better responses to Question 3 on the whole. The concept of economic modernisation which Question 2, 04 focused was not well understood.

Question 1

01 Whilst it has been noted that the majority of students have clearly secured an effective examination technique for the source comparison answer, some still struggled. Answers which merely summarised the two sources is not an effective approach. It is the **views** of the sources which should be considered, not the source content. It is important to note that difference by omission is not a valid comparison. Therefore responses which merely rephrased what Source A said and then what Source B said did not score highly.

However, many students did manage to secure Level 3 marks for their responses by contrasting the more negative tone of Source A with the more positive tone of Source B. Level 4 responses clearly understood that the sources differed because they were looking at different points in the development of Fascist education, source A at the 1920s, whilst Source B was looking at the longer term impact of Fascist indoctrination.

More responses needed to use own knowledge to develop the differences and similarities of the sources, to explain how far they differed. Whilst it was highlighted in the summer report that too much own knowledge can distract from the source comparison, a significant number of responses had very little own knowledge to explain their reasoning.

It is pleasing to note that there were fewer answers which made bland references to the source provenance. However, a number insisted that because Source B was written in 1985 the author was still indoctrinated by Mussolini's educational propaganda.

02 Higher level responses engaged fully with this question on the impact of fascism on the Italian population by identifying a number of social groups, such as the youth, women and workers. Weaker responses were able to secure Level 2 through source use. What was surprising was that a great number of students failed to make the obvious point to be inferred from Source C, that the regime's attempts to create a nation of Fascists had clearly failed by 1936 because a policy of 'accelerating fascistisation' was needed. More thoughtful answers clearly considered the term 'loyal Fascists' and emphasised that conformity with the regime did not necessarily mean widespread Fascist indoctrination.

Question 2

- 03** The majority of students were awarded high Level 2 or low Level 3 for their responses. A downfall of weaker responses was a lack of range in the reasons why the Battle for the Lira was launched and many merely repeated the point about international prestige in a variety of disguises. Other responses lapsed into the impact of the Battle of the Lira, which was not credit worthy.
- 04** This question proved to be the most challenging for students as many ignored the precise wording which focused on modernisation. Many students launched into an essay which evaluated the successes and failures of Mussolini's economic battles. This was not an effective approach as material was descriptive and lacking in focus, depth and range. Questions on the economy require students to demonstrate a wider range of information than just the economic battles. Better responses clearly had more range and considered the Corporate State, IMI, IRI and Italy's readiness for war in 1939. The best responses engaged explicitly with the concept of modernisation and looked at the themes of industrialisation and ruralisation.

Question 3

- 05** The majority of students achieved Level 3 or above for their responses to this question. A wide range of reasons for expansion into Africa was given. Level 4 answers clearly categorised their reasons into long-term/short-term, social, economic and ideological and developed them with precision.
- 06** This question was generally approached competently with the majority of students being able to clearly identify some of Mussolini's foreign policy ambitions. What limited some student responses was a lack of range of evidence due to a failure to address the whole timescale of the question. Once again dates are important, this question spanned from 1923 to 1940, so responses which focused just on the 1930s lacked the range necessary to achieve Level 4.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

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