



**General Certificate of Education
January 2011**

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 responses varied from the lowest to the highest levels. The length of answers was almost always appropriate to the marks allocated, although a significant number of candidates spent too much time on lengthy paraphrase of the sources in Question 01. Only a minority of candidates failed to produce complete answers to all the four questions attempted. Many scripts continue to reflect an enthusiasm for the subject.

Question 1

- 01** The demand of the source comparison question continues to trouble a number of candidates who continue to paraphrase the source content. It is worth reiterating what the examiner is looking for. Candidates need to explicitly contrast the views of the sources and look for differences and similarities. A judgement about how far the sources differ should be made through reference to own knowledge. It is the views of the sources which should be considered, not the source content.

These two sources posed a number of difficulties for candidates who could not see past the literal factual detail. Comparisons were made which were inaccurate. A common error was for weak responses was to contrast Source A's statement in line 1 "He did not need to use force" with Source B's statement on line 7 "the March on Rome was a show of strength against the democratic government" and then conclude that A says Mussolini did not need to use violence whilst B says he did. This however was not the view of the sources. Better responses understood that Source A's view was that the only way to stop the Fascist violence was to offer them a position in government, whilst Source B clearly had the view that Fascist violence could be contained through the power of the King to call upon the armed forces. Candidates must read the sources carefully and not leap to misguided conclusions.

There were a number of responses which were heavily based upon own knowledge of reasons why Mussolini was appointed to power. The purpose of question 01 is to test a candidate's source interpretation skills, therefore responses which were based primarily on own knowledge did not score highly and were awarded low level 2.

Once again there were responses which persisted with bland references to the origins of the sources. The most bizarre concluded that Source B was the most reliable because it was a primary source written by an Italian, others stated that because Source B was written by an Italian he had pro-fascist views. Needless to say these responses were inaccurate.

- 02** The responses to this question were quite pleasing. If there was a common downfall, it was that some candidates spent far too long on explaining the King's role in getting Mussolini into power, when the question was about Mussolini's consolidation of power. Therefore some responses, whilst being balanced, lacked the secure range of factual detail needed for Level 4 because they failed to cover the period to 1929.

Question 2

- 03** The majority of responses scored Level 3 because they had a sound range of reasons why the ONB was introduced. If answers were kept in Level 2 it was because the issue of indoctrination and control was repeated in a various number of disguises. Some unfortunate candidates clearly had no idea what the ONB was and confused it completely with the OND.
- 04** This question proved challenging to candidates. Some responses varied treated the question as a general essay on Mussolini's popular support and only had a short paragraph on policies towards women. These responses were limited in relevance and detail and were awarded no higher than Level 2. Other responses saw the words "Fascist policies towards women and girls" and proceeded to write copious amounts of factual description of policies with little evaluation of popular support, hence these were awarded Level 3 maximum. Some clearly knew very little about Fascist policies towards women and asserted links to public support. The absence of OMNI from all of the responses was worrying.

Question 3

- 05** This question worked well, the majority of answers were awarded a secure Level 3. A range of evidence regarding the motives for Italy's involvement in Spain was put forward. Weaker responses tended to describe the motives for fascist foreign policy in general with scant regard for Spain.
- 06** This question proved to be an effective differentiator. Weaker responses tended to describe the development of the relationship between Italy and Nazi Germany and were awarded Level 2. Better responses were able to focus on the disastrous consequences for Italy by focusing on the period 1940 to 1943 and were awarded Level 3. Balance was achieved by either looking at the ways in which Nazi Germany supported the Italian war effort and boosted their international prestige or by evaluating how far Mussolini brought disaster to Italy himself. Balanced responses were awarded Level 4 or higher if a clear judgement was made.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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