

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505


For first teaching in 2015

Y113/01 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper Y113/01 series overview

Y 113 is one of thirteen components for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This component tests an extended period of History of about fifty years through an Enquiries or source-based option and an essay. The paper is divided into two sections. In Section A candidates have to answer a compulsory source questions based on four written primary sources. The question requires them to use all four sources to assess the validity of a view. In Section B candidates are required to answer one essay question from a choice of two.

To do well on Section A, candidates need to be able to consider both provenance of the sources and apply contextual knowledge to them in order to reach a judgement about the sources in relation to the issue in the question.

To do well on Section B candidates need to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. In order to reach the higher levels candidates will need to assess the issues they discuss and reach a supported judgement at least in the conclusion.

<i>Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:</i>	<i>Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered the provenance of the source(s) and used relevant contextual knowledge. • The contextual knowledge was clearly linked to the source being discussed to show whether the view of the source was valid or not. • Reach an overall judgement as to the extent to which the sources supported the view in the question. • In answering the essay question candidates discussed at least two issues in depth. • The supporting detail was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic. • Reach a supported judgement about the issue in the question. • Make a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not consider both the provenance and use contextual knowledge to evaluate the sources. • Wrote an unbalanced answer in their treatment of the sources, with very little consideration of one of the sources. • Reached a judgement based on their knowledge rather than the sources. • Showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay. • Were unable to support their answer with relevant material. • Did not focus on the precise wording of the question. • Made unsupported comments about issues which were assertions.

Section A overview

The Enquiry section in this component examines Churchill's views about foreign policy in the period from 1930 to the outbreak of WW2 and in particular examines the view that his attitudes were unrealistic in relation towards this. The question requires candidates to critically assess evidence and reach judgements. The critical evaluation of sources is the central theme in this section with all marks given against AO2

Question 1

Churchill 1930–1951

- 1 Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that Churchill was unrealistic in his attitude towards foreign policy in the period from 1930 to the outbreak of the Second World War. [30]

Most candidates found this question to be accessible and were able to analyse the content of the four sources and reach a reasonable conclusion as to whether Churchill's foreign policy view was unrealistic during the 1930s. Most candidates knew that they had to include contextual support alongside source analysis. Provenance was surprisingly omitted though in a number of scripts, meaning that answers were pinned into Level 3. Candidates should be aware that answers must have both contextual knowledge and evaluation of provenance to go beyond this level.

Source A was used to both support and challenge the given view. Those candidates who took the source at face value referred to Churchill's concerns about the strength of the German air force and Britain's need to rearm. This was usually accompanied by good contextual knowledge of Hitler's rearmament programme or indeed Churchill's part in the 10 Year Rule. Provenance was treated in different ways. Some candidates saw this as a speech made to the Commons in 1934 and evaluated this accordingly as Churchill looking for support for his policies whereas higher level answers noted that this was included in Churchill's 1948 book, the Gathering Storm. Those who did this usually developed their analysis by showing that there was another election looming and Churchill was stressing his position as a war hero.

Source B was generally used to demonstrate that Churchill's views were unrealistic. Most were able to show how the East Fulham by-election victory demonstrated a desire for peace among the population. A number of candidates substantiated this referring to good contextual knowledge of the 1933 Oxford Union debate and the 1934 Peace Ballot to explain why Baldwin was being realistic. Others pointed to the Anglo-German naval agreement and the reoccupation of the Rhineland to show how Baldwin was misguided and that Churchill had a point. Provenance was less well developed with some candidates assuming that Baldwin was a Labour Prime Minister or indeed that in 1936 he was preparing for an election. Better responses examined the state of the British economy and used this to explain why Baldwin wanted to explain about the lack of rearmament.

Source C was also used to show how Churchill's views were unrealistic. The idea that the military experts had already dismissed the plan of a Grand Alliance was generally well-known and many were able to discuss the issues of allying with Russia and the USA. Only the best responses were able to discuss the strength of Czech fortifications and their military as a counterview to Chamberlain's source to perhaps support Churchill. Most were able to discuss Britain's rearmament and its lack of readiness for conflict at this stage. Weaker responses tended to solely focus on the geographical aspects of the source and repeat its contents without applying more contextual knowledge provenance was well-handled with most pointing out that this was a private letter where Chamberlain would be able to reveal his true thoughts.

Source D was used to justify Churchill's views and the content on neglect of defences was picked up by most candidates, with many able to show how Churchill himself had played some part in this during the 1920s. Provenance was reasonably well-handled with most aware that this was Churchill attempting to win support for a policy that did not chime with Chamberlain's "Peace in our time". There was good contextual knowledge of Munich, although weaker responses did not grasp the chronology of the time, with a few thinking that this related to the invasion of Poland.

Exemplar 1 demonstrates a response that analyses the content of each source particularly well and uses pertinent references to contextual knowledge and provenance to reach a supported judgement. This was a clear Level 6 answer.

Exemplar 1

Source C supports the view that Churchill was unrealistic in his attitude towards foreign policy, as his plan of a 'Grand Alliance' was unfeasible. Source B, in comparison, partially challenges the view, suggesting there may have been a need to rearm but it would have cost an election. In contrast, sources A and D both challenge the view, asserting Churchill's approach was realistic and correct.

Firstly, Source C supports the view, stating that Churchill's plan of 'Grand Alliance' had its "attraction [vanish]" when "Foreign Office experts ... examine its practicability". This source is partially correct. The Grand Alliance was not feasible in 1938; USA was isolationist and the Neutrality Acts still prevented her from entering war. Moreover, Britain herself was not yet ready for war; still feeling the effects of the '10 Year Rule', which did not plan for war for the next 10 years. Therefore, British armed forces were old-fashioned and limited. However, a 'Grand Alliance' between the 'Big 3' (USA, USSR and Britain)

did help bring an Allied victory in World War Two (WW2). Furthermore, this source is written by Neville Chamberlain in March 1938 to his sister. Chamberlain was opposed in views to Churchill; preferring appeasement. However, this source is written contemporaneously and candidly in a private letter, ~~therefore~~ revealing ^{some} ~~the~~ merit in Churchill's views. Therefore, this source is quite reliable in its assertion that, after Anschluss, Churchill's attitude to foreign policy was unrealistic. However, due to the fact that this source is only partially correct in its assertion that the 'Grand Alliance' would not work, source C only partially supports the view in question.

Source B, on the other hand, partially disagrees with the view in question. In 1933, the source reveals the view that "Germany was rearming and we must rearm" but this would have brought about the "loss of the election". Therefore, Churchill's desire to rearm was founded. This source is correct; by 1933, Germany had left the League of Nations and was building up an airforce in secret.

Moreover, the source asserts that British rearmament was unpopular and would have lost the election. This is correct, British public believed an arms race began World War One and would im-
plaine another war. This source asserts Churchill was realistic in ^{short-term} foreign policy by wanting to rearm, but in the long-term, rearmament had to be delayed for political gain and gain greater foreign strength. This source is given in a speech by Stanley Baldwin to Commons in November 1936, reflecting on 1933. By 1936, it was necessary to rearm, as Hitler had re-militarised the Rhineland (March 1936). Therefore, Baldwin argues it was right to wait. However, Baldwin, although a Conservative, had opposing views to Churchill and supported delaying rearmament, making this source unreliable. As a result, the unreliability of this source undermines source B's ~~asserts~~ ^{challenge} (even though partial) for the view that Churchill's approach to foreign policy was unrealistic.

Source D, in contrast, entirely challenges the view in question, stating "we have sustained defeat without a war" in

regards to the Munich Conference. Churchill opposed the appeasement of the Munich Conference, calling it cowardice in the Commons. This source's assertion that the Munich Agreement was a defeat is correct; it encouraged further aggressive expansionism for Hitler because he believed Britain would not respond, such as the occupation of Czechoslovakia (March 1939) and subsequent invasion of Poland (September 1939). However, this source is written by Churchill in October 1938 in the Commons. Therefore, Churchill is resolutely supporting his own views and revealing faults in appeasement, making this source biased and unreliable. As a result, although this ~~source~~ ^{source} initially challenges the view, its unreliability undermines its challenge that Churchill was ~~not~~ unrealistic in his approach.

Lastly, source A also challenges the view in question, stating that Churchill encouraged the government to rearm and make sure that by 1936 "German air forces are [not] stronger than our own", or "they will have failed". This source

is correct that by 1936, Britain would need to begin to rearm, as Germany had created the Luftwaffe (1935), reintroduced conscription (1935) and increased the navy. Moreover, its specific focus on air forces is accurate, as air superiority was key in eventual victory in war, providing cover for invasions. However, this source is a recollection of a speech made in 1934, included in Churchill's memoirs published in 1948. Therefore, Churchill will have selected this speech to show his forethought and accuracy in prediction. Yet it will not reveal Churchill's faults or unrealistic views, making it unreliable. Therefore, the unreliability of this source undermines its challenge to the view Churchill was unrealistic.

Overall, although sources A and D and 3 challenge the view, their unreliability undermines their disagreement. As a result, the reliability of source C, along with its accuracy, ~~but~~ largely supports the view that Churchill was unrealistic in his attitude towards foreign policy in the pre-war period, as a Grand Alliance only won in 1944.

Section B overview

Two essays are set, each from a different Key Topic. Here the candidates are asked to examine the reasons why the Conservative Party won the 1970 election and to assess whether the Thatcher governments were responsible for an economic revolution. The questions set require candidates to analyse causes and consequences of major historical issues.

Question 2

Britain 1951–1997

2* Assess the reasons why the Conservatives won the 1970 election.

[20]

This question was generally well answered and was accessible for all candidates. Most candidates recognised that this question required an examination of Labour weaknesses alongside Conservative strengths. Good answers took a view of both of these factors and used comparisons with good justification and development. For example some answers compared Wilson's complacent approach to Heath's strong campaign. This can be seen in Exemplar 2 which demonstrates where a candidate analyses Conservative strengths against Labour's perceived weaknesses. Good candidates compared the party unrest and trade union problems with Heath's decisive leadership in sacking Powell after his "rivers of blood" speech. Weaker answers tended to write a tick list of explanations of Labour weakness versus Conservative strengths without linking back to the answer and so lacked some depth and analysis. A few candidates mixed up the 1964 and 1970 elections, and so included irrelevant detail.

Exemplar 2

The new leadership of Heath contributed to his election victory. Unlike previous Tory leaders, Heath had been educated at a grammar school, rather than a private school. This appealed to many voters as he appeared to be more down-to-earth and reliable, which increased the amount of votes received from middle and working class voters. Heath was also able to utilise the platforms available to him, such as TV interviews. Although he was not as charismatic as Wilson, his more classless background, ~~compared to~~ ^{added to} ~~with~~ the issues currently plaguing the Labour party, made him the more attractive leader. This caused many people to switch to conservative, often from the liberal party, and gave the conservatives enough votes to secure the election victory.

Question 3

3* 'The Thatcher governments were responsible for an economic revolution.' How far do you agree?
[20]

Another popular question, this essay elicited a wide range of responses. The most fruitful method proved to be when candidates defined the idea of an economic revolution and stated from the outset what the criteria of measurement was. The idea of economic revolution was wide-ranging and as long as this was established in the introduction then it left candidates free to construct a relevant argument. Exemplar 3 demonstrates where a candidate has done this particularly well in their introduction. There were a few excellent answers which addressed the fundamental changes to the structure of the British economy and Thatcher's shift from Keynesian economics to a free market model. These answers argued intelligently about the aim to bring inflation under control, the deregulation of financial services and the issue of privatisation. This was offset against rising unemployment, private monopolies and high government expenditure. Weaker responses tended to focus on the success and failure of her economic policies rather than focus on the idea of revolution. Although the majority of candidates saw this as an economic question, a minority wanted to discuss social and even foreign policy and were unrewarded.

Exemplar 3

Thatcher was in power from 1979 to 1990. In terms of theory and approach, such as monetarism, privatisation and deregulation, Thatcher was responsible for an economic revolution. However, in terms of the effects and certain policies (non-state intervention and deflation) Thatcher was not entirely revolutionary or different. Yet, overall, Thatcher's economic approach and effect was so radically different that her governments were responsible for an economic revolution.

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