

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y220/01 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 Y220/01 series overview

The distribution of question completion was fairly even; the frequency of students attempting Question 1 was similar to the number attempting Question 2. It was exceptional to see a rubric error. On one occasion, the response consisted of both 20 mark questions, Question 1b) and Question 2b). The resulting mark was the highest mark out of the two completed. This indicates that it is very important for candidates to make sure they answer all of Question 1 or all of Question 2. The question paper does clearly indicate this instruction, and the proportionately small number of rubric errors does suggest candidates are largely aware of this.

The responses generally consisted of a good application of key terms, in most cases supported by accurate grammatical and spelling conventions. Overall, this unit demonstrated a good degree of written communication from many of the responses. In addition, candidates almost always wrote a substantial amount for both parts of the question, the 10 mark and 20 mark element.

Question 1 (a)

1 (a) Which of the following proved the greater humiliation for Italy during the years 1915–1925?

(i) Defeat at Caporetto in 1917

(ii) The failure to gain Fiume at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

Candidate responses generally explained the humiliation in the failure to gain Fiume effectively as part of the 'mutilated victory'. The level of analysis was usually higher than the other factor, explaining that humiliation occurred for several reasons; Italy wanted to be a great power; Italy had agreed territorial claims at the Treaty of London; 600,000 Italians had died for nothing. Finally, responses frequently discussed D'Annunzio's occupation as evidence of humiliation, and made the Liberal government look weak, or alternatively it was an occupation that ameliorated the impact of not gaining Fiume. A few mentioned Orlando walking out of the Treaty negotiations. However, the counter-arguments suggesting that the humiliation was limited addressed the fact that D'Annunzio's occupation of Fiume softened the blow, and importantly Italy did gain territorially via the acquisition of South Tyrol, Istria and Trieste. A significant number of responses claimed the humiliation was great as Fiume was promised at the Treaty of London - this was not the case. Regardless of this error, responses were still able to explain aspects of the humiliation with some relevance.

Caporetto was dealt with less effectively in terms of relevant supporting knowledge. More limited responses consisted of generalised answers claiming why the First World War in general was a disaster for Italy without a specific reference to the battle. These responses did not score highly due to the generalised and limited level of information. More sophisticated responses provided specific details about the humiliation; the resignation of Cadorna, the significant number of captured soldiers, the numbers killed and/or the degree to which the army retreated. A good counterargument to suggest that the Battle of Caporetto was not wholly humiliating focused on how the memory of the battle was erased by the success at Vittorio Veneto, and wider gains after the capitulation of the Central Powers.

To achieve the highest levels, a valid judgement on the most humiliating factor was necessary. Candidates who claimed Caporetto was more humiliating made good links between this defeat and the Franco-British perception of the Italian war effort, and the subsequent impact this perception had on the peace settlement.

Question 1 (b)

(b)* 'The period 1896–1915 was one of progress for Italy.' How far do you agree?

[20]

The most common means of classifying this response was to categorise elements of progress and failure within economic, social and political arguments. To achieve a Level 4 or above, it was necessary for candidate responses to explain both aspects of progress and failure. This prevented the response from being a partial address of the question and one that lacked balance. The address of political factors commonly highlighted trasformismo as both a positive and/or negative element regarding political progress. The coalitions often fractured and generated parliamentary instability. The bribery and corruption was also a common critique. Alternatively, Giolitti was praised for creating a system that was representative and to some extent, worked. In an economic sense, the prevalence of the north-south divide was cited as an ongoing problem, and the development of industry in the north was argued to be key evidence of progress. Socially, Giolitti was often analysed in a positive way, for his role in ameliorating the impact of cholera, and for raising literacy rates and improving working conditions. Colonial ambitions were also considered, and the impact foreign policy had on the progress of Italy. This argument usually provided a mixed analysis, citing the disaster of Adowa but also success in Libya and the potential to sit at the top table after the Treaty of London.

Most responses provided at least some judgement to argue that overall there was a greater degree of success or failure, and the responses often yielded clear explanation and specific knowledge to support claims made. Exemplar 1 provides an example of a clear argument that is supported by specific knowledge and directly addresses the question.

Exemplar 1

		Finally, Italy also failed to progress much socially during the period of 1896-1915. After the unification, Italy struggled for a national identity, as many Italians didn't feel like Italians, and felt more belonging to their state, such as 'Tuscans' or 'Sicilians'. This meant that Italy was a divided country where many states had many and conflicts. This can be shown by the fact that in 1896 only 2% of Italians spoke the Italian language. Also, the lack of the education system before unification, meant that 61% of Italians were illiterate in the period, which showed a significant lack of progress for Italy. Another sign of a lack of social progress was the North/South divide, where many of the South were poverty stricken, and
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		affected by disease such as Cholera and Malaria, whereas the North was prospering due to huge investment into industry. The North/South divide is still a big thing wasn't healed by the Liberal State during the period, even as the divide remained in 1910, as many Southerners didn't favored neutrality, as they didn't wish to 'fight' for a few Northern territories such as Tyrol, Trieste and Trentino. This divide also shows the lack of national identity, as many Italians don't refer to themselves as 'Italians', meaning there was vast divisions between classes, and regions.
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This exemplar addressed a lack of progress in 'Liberal Italy' due to ongoing social divisions.

Question 2 (a)

2 (a) Which of the following factors did more to hinder the successful development of 'Liberal Italy' during the years 1896–1915?

- (i) Trasformismo
- (ii) Colonial ambitions

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

In terms of analysis, trasformismo was the weaker factor of the two. In addition, this was also commonly misspelt as 'transformismo', even in cases where the responses were justified and balanced. Some responses did not show an accurate understanding of trasformismo (see Exemplar 2). However, most responses were able to relate the system to politics, Giolitti and other related problems. More sophisticated responses explained how the coalitions of compromise and corruption created instability for 'Liberal Italy.'

Colonial ambitions were dealt with more effectively. The accuracy of supporting knowledge was greater. Almost all candidates accurately cited the Battle of Adowa as a disaster for colonial ambitions and explained the impact on 'Liberal Italy'. Most candidates also outlined events in Libya. Occasionally, responses were inaccurate here, but the discussion of Libya was often effectively used to demonstrate success i.e. due to territorial gains, or failures, due to the mounting costs of the campaign and later insurgency. There was some good evaluation of both factors where Libya was linked to a failure of trasformismo due to the rejection of the campaign by the socialists. The final point for discussion was the Treaty of London. This was best explained in a positive light, an event that essentially meant the relatively new country of Italy was sitting at the top table in European affairs. Weaker attempts at analysis went beyond the question and spoke about how these ambitions were not met by the 'mutilated victory.' This was better explained if there was explicit focus back to events before and during 1915 but commonly went beyond the demands of the question.

There were some very good judgements that made links between the failure of trasformismo and the failure of colonial ambitions. This is not always necessary for a sophisticated response, but it can be a useful approach in the evaluation of the factors, making connections to analyse cause and effect.

Exemplar 2

Trasformismo is the corruption of the government in them taking bribes and corruption. The way liberal Italy when they had universal only 1% of the populations were allowed to vote there ~~was~~ 2% were made up of northern aristocrats this made the country not liberal and very divided. The development through this time was hindered as Italy didn't have enough money to back the industrialization that other major European countries were doing.

Exemplar 2 shows a limited treatment of the factor, trasformismo. The term is misspelt and not accurately defined, the corruption being one of the reasons why the system hindered the coalitions formed. Then the response drifts to the question of suffrage and then industrialisation. Hence, the consideration of the factor here is limited in its accuracy.

Question 2 (b)

(b)* 'Had Mussolini died at the end of 1934, the world would have mourned the loss of a great statesman.' How far do you agree with this judgement on Mussolini's foreign policy 1922–1943? **[20]**

The most sophisticated responses were able to clearly anchor information to events before and after 1934. This could be achieved by looking at successes and failures prior to 1934, or contrasting events before and after 1934. Candidates commonly spoke about events in Corfu; pacts and agreements, notably Locarno and Kellogg-Briand; events in Abyssinia; the Spanish Civil War and relations with Nazi Germany, including stopping Anschluss, and later being dragged into a disastrous war. In some cases, where candidates did not grasp the question, there was a relatively accurate list to illustrate events but little accurate development to analyse the information in response to the question. Chronological understanding was important in this response and this sometimes limited the quality of arguments, for example, when events were misconceived to be before or after 1934.

The weaker responses often met Level 3 or Level 2 characteristics. This is because they exhibited a partial address of the question, only unable to accurately and comprehensively explain foreign policy events with specific reference to the idea of mourning a 'great statesman' before 1934. It was perfectly acceptable for candidates to go beyond 1934, but the explanation and analysis had to refer to 1934 and perceptions of Mussolini before or after this date. For example, an analysis of Mussolini's growing relationship with Nazi Germany from after Rome-Berlin axis, or the invasion of Abyssinia in 1935, could all be made relevant when compared to events prior to 1934 and the notion of mourning a 'great statesmen.' Level 2 responses were not able to achieve this level of focus hence, they addressed the topic of foreign affairs in quite an arbitrary manner. (See Exemplar 3.) Some of these responses considered Mussolini's successes and failures with no reference to events prior to or succeeding 1934. This question therefore outlined the necessity for responses to directly address the question and think carefully about how evidence can be used to develop responses to make sure an explicit focus, rather than an implicit focus via a discussion of foreign policy. There was also some evidence of weaker, Level 1 responses. These responses were very limited in their knowledge and understanding of the question, and/or foreign policy and instead addressed Mussolini's domestic policies, the Battle for Lira, the Battle for Births, etc.

Exemplar 3

Mussolini was a fascist dictator which Hitler sort to copy and did. ~~Even~~ though he was a peace maker, he made Rome to be the center of diplomatic issues in Europe. Italy was not ready for war and if they went to war Italy would lose thousands of men this made Mussolini want to prevent the war with signing peace pacts Locarno treaty with Britain, Belgium and Germany. However Mussolini failed to make Italy's borders secure in it with Germany. Mussolini also was the key influence to let Hitler regain the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. The reason was because it had 2.5 million German speaking people. It also had 75% of the countries industry and its defences. Without its defences Czechoslovakia would be left defenceless. Mussolini also was a part of the Kellogg-Briand Pact.

Exemplar 3 describes domestic policy for the most part. The first section shown was the only address of foreign policy in the answer. The response is unable to explicitly meet the demands of the question, showing limited description and assertion.

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