

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y218/01 Summer 2022 series

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper Y218/01 series overview	4
Question 1 (a)	5
Question 1 (b)*	6
Question 2 (a)	7
Question 2 (b)	9

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. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. 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 and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

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Paper Y218/01 series overview

Almost all responses adhered to the correct convention and answered both questions from either Section A or Section B. On occasion, candidates selected one or more questions from both sections. Section A was slightly more popular than Section B.

Overall, the standard of written communication was reasonably good and references to specific knowledge showed accuracy although there was some generalisation. However, there were some well-developed responses showing sound knowledge and analysis.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understood the key issues in the questions • knew the key events with reasonable depth of knowledge to be able to effectively support their arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not focus their responses on the question asked • had a generalised knowledge rather than detailed knowledge • did not manage their time effectively to be able to fully complete both responses.

Advice to centres – wording of questions

Candidates would enhance their performance in their responses to all questions if the wording of the questions were considered carefully so that they are more likely to be aware of the specific demands of the question.

Question 1 (a)

- 1 (a) Which of the following had the greatest impact upon European relations up to 1941?
- (i) The Spanish Civil War
 - (ii) The Nazi-Soviet Pact

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

[10]

The focus of this question was for candidates to provide a comparative analysis of which of these two events had a greater impact on European nations up to 1941. Overall candidates had a good understanding of the Spanish Civil War and recognised that it had an impact of European nations because it brought Germany and Italy together closer together and therefore, strengthened fascism.

Higher achieving responses recognised that Britain and France's non-intervention strained relations with the USSR contributing to Stalin's isolation and openness to new alliances. The more accomplished responses understood that the Nazi-Soviet Pact made World War Two more likely and this became the basis of the argument that the Pact had a greater impact on European relations. There were a significant number of responses that demonstrated a lack of understanding of the difference between a pact and an alliance.

One of the common errors in this type of question is that responses provide relevant knowledge of the events but then do not use it to provide a comparative narrative related to the question, as shown in Exemplar 1.

Exemplar 1

		Nevertheless, the Spanish Civil War also increased tensions and allowed Mexican powers to see the increasing likelihood of
		war. Despite the best efforts of the majority of nations - war was becoming a very ^{harsh} protruding reality. The Spanish Civil War was an explosion of social dissatisfaction between 1936-1936 which had been gradually increasing since 1932. General Franco led the revolt in an attempt to coup the hybrid monarchy and dictatorship. The term 'Civil war' is not appropriate to use in this instance because Italy, Germany and the USSR became actively involved. For Germany and Italy the ideology the democracies were using (side of General Franco) resonated minutely to Fascism. Therefore Hitler seized the opportunity to initiate his 4,000 Luftwaffe aircrafts and train his 2,287,000

		million men. Not only was it a training ground but it also
		provided an opportunity for two fascist leaders to become closer,
		Mussolini and Hitler. This impacted European relations but
		it meant that alternative methods to avoid war could be
		instigated before it was formally declared.

Exemplar 1 is an extract from a response that provides some relevant and detailed knowledge of the Spanish Civil War and at the end, adds that it 'impacted on European relations' but does not go on to analyse the extent of the impact. A Level 3 response.

Question 1 (b)*

(b)* 'The Treaty of Versailles was the cause of deteriorating relations between Japan and her former First World War allies during the period from 1918 to 1941.' How far do you agree?

[20]

The focus of this question was to analyse the reasons for deteriorating relations between Japan and her WW1 allies with the Treaty of Versailles being given as the main factor. Most candidates were aware of the significance of the Treaty of Versailles in deteriorating relations, explaining that Japan was denied the Racial Equality Clause and were only successful with some of their land claims. Better responses also drew attention to Japan's exclusion from the council of four. Only a minority of the best responses highlighted that Japan was well rewarded at the Treaty of Versailles, in terms of land gained and their inclusion in the permanent council of the League of Nations. Many responses analysed Japan's own actions in damaging relations, particularly with reference to Manchuria and the Sino-Japanese War. More developed responses explored factors such as the Washington Naval Conference, economic problems, rising global nationalism and the actions of the USA in deteriorating relations.

Some of the weaker responses were hindered by a lack of detailed knowledge and some focused on the Treaty of Versailles, concentrating on how the treaty punished Germany rather than addressing the question of Japan.

Question 2 (a)

2 (a) Which was the greater failure of international diplomacy?

(i) The Corfu Incident

(ii) The Washington and London Naval Agreements

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

[10]

The focus of this question was for candidates to provide a comparative analysis of which of these two events was the greater failure of international diplomacy. The majority of candidates understood the key events of the Corfu Incident and wrote about how Italian aggression went unpunished. Better responses were able to explain why the response of the international community was a failure, explaining how it undermined the League of Nations and its aims, particularly because the incident was referred to the Council of Ambassadors to resolve.

Good responses also highlighted that the incident showed that major powers were inconsistent when dealing with conflicts involving smaller and major powers. Most candidates were also able to explain how the Washington and London Naval Agreements contributed to disarmament and failed because the agreements benefitted Britain and the USA and angered nations such as Japan. Better responses also recognised that Japan had to cede land in the Washington Naval Agreement, making it feel further isolated. Only a minority of candidates explained that the agreements failed because the terms of the agreements were violated, and because they were largely abandoned in the mid-1930s.

Accomplished responses were able to attempt at a comparative analysis of the greater failure of these two events (see Exemplar 2). Weaker responses showed little relevant knowledge of the events in Corfu, and demonstrated misconceptions, e.g., discussing how the Naval Agreements affected Germany.

Exemplar 2

Overall, though the Washington and London Naval Agreements were failures in international diplomacy as they worked to isolate and enrage Japan, they also did bring a spirit of cooperation and were successful in securing some levels of disarmament. Corfu, on the other hand, was a complete failure of diplomacy as it highlighted the weakness of the League, who had no military force, to deal with disputes involving larger powers. The League was also undermined by the influence of the Conference of Ambassadors. As the League was the primary peace keeping organisation, its failure and weakness can be seen as a huge failure in international diplomacy, as without a strong League, there would be no deterrent to avoid aggression, as can be seen in the following years with the Manchurian and then Abyssinian crises.

Exemplar 2 is an extract from a Level 4 response that makes a good attempt to provide a comparative analysis of these two events, namely the Corfu incident and the Washington and London Naval Agreements. A Level 4 response.

Question 2 (b)

(b)* 'For much of the period from 1929 to 1939, the policy of appeasement was mostly successful.'
How far do you agree? **[20]**

The focus of the question was for candidates to analyse whether the policy of appeasement was successful or not. Most responses were able to comment on why appeasement failed, referring to the British and French failure to effectively deal with Germany in places such as the Rhineland, Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia. Better responses went beyond Germany analysing how appeasement of Italy and Japan failed. Surprisingly few candidates paid attention to appeasement's successes and this meant that these responses were partially addressing the question and, therefore, were unable to achieve the higher levels despite the quality of their analysis of appeasement's failures. Those which did examine successes explored the popularity of appeasement among the general publics of Britain and France, the fact that neither country was ready to fight war due to economic problems and lack of preparation, and the ways in which appeasement gave these countries additional time to rearm so that they were better prepared to fight. Effective responses also drew attention to the fact that appeasement delayed the start of World War Two.

Some responses did not adhere to the time frame in the question and provided knowledge and analysis of events in the 1920's using the League of Nations as the focal point of their analysis.

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