

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H105

For first teaching in 2015

Y251/01 Summer 2022 series

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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. 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

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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Paper Y251/01 series overview

Y251 is one of five units for the revised AS Level examination for GCE History. The units present a borehole approach so that students can see change and developments and make substantiated judgements over substantial lengths of time and see issues in a wider perspective. In Section A candidates have to answer one essay question from a choice of two. The second question requires them to evaluate a given historical interpretation using their knowledge to evaluate its strengths and limitations.

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"> • in answering the essay question, discussed at least two issues in depth • gave supporting detail that was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic • reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question • made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question • in answering the interpretation questions, were able to evaluate the strengths and limitations of that interpretation using contextual knowledge that was relevant to the issues raised by the quotation • made reference to other interpretations and had good knowledge of the historical debate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • showed a weaker 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 • described the interpretation without analysing its strengths and weaknesses • did not link their contextual knowledge to the specific issues raised in the quotation.

Section A overview

In Section A candidates are required to answer one question from a choice of two. Candidates are likely to spend up to an hour on this section. Candidates can score well by considering two or three issues in depth and reaching a supported judgement. However, it is important to make sure that the issues selected allow a justifiable judgement to be reached. The majority of candidates chose to answer Question 1, but Question 2 did elicit a moderate number of responses.

Question 1*

- 1* 'Hyperinflation was the greatest problem faced by the Weimar Republic in the period from 1919 to 1923.' How far do you agree? **[30]**

This was the more popular of the essay choices with most candidates aware of the struggles facing Weimar in its early years. The main factor, hyperinflation, was sometimes tackled more generally, with weaker responses confusing the 1923 crisis with the Wall Street Crash and its effects on Germany.

Stronger responses were able to discuss a range of issues including the impact on savers and investors as well as its impact on those with fixed incomes. Food shortages were another common theme. Most candidates were able to set that against the speed in which Stresemann dealt with the crisis, although again the Rentenmark was confused with other currencies that were introduced in German history.

The best responses pointed out some people benefited from hyperinflation and were able to make a good case for this. Hyperinflation was set against a range of other factors including the Kapp Putsch, Communist uprisings such as the Spartakist rising in Berlin and the Ruhr uprising, the Munich Putsch as well as other factors including the Treaty of Versailles, the occupation of the Ruhr and political instability. The best responses also set these factors against each other and compared the size of these problems facing the Weimar Republic.

Exemplar 1 demonstrates this and is a good example of a Level 5 response with judgement.

Misconception



Several candidates confused the Hyperinflation crisis of 1923 with the Wall Street Crash and its impact.

Exemplar 1

1	<p>The Weimar Republic faced a period of both economic and political stability during the years 1919 to 1923 due to the impacts of WW1. Political factor This naturally increased support for more radical parties, who, at times, attempted to overthrow the current system. There were threats from both the left and the right, but the most significant threat came from the right. This is because although it was only mildly threatening in the short-term, the the Munich Putsch had serious long-term implications for Germany, more so than that of hyperinflation.</p>
	<p>Hyperinflation became a serious problem for Germany towards the end of this period, following the announcement that they would have to pay £6,000 million in reparations, as part of the Treaty of Versailles (T.V). This in itself would have strained any government's economic budget, having to pay large amounts over a number of years, but this was further strained by war pensions and the Ruhr crisis. The Ruhr crisis saw the xxxx French and Belgian governments sending in their own workers, after as Germany fell behind in reparation payments, and its workers had gone on strike. This meant that the Weimar government had to print more money in order to pay these workers, adding to the already serious problem of hyperinflation. This had ser significant implications on the</p>

people of Germany. For example, those who relied on fixed incomes (e.g., pensioners) now were receiving relatively much less as the mark decreased in value and those who had invested their money in war bonds prior to the war received very little in return. This meant many had to rely on the black market, highlighting the social and economic instability. Overall, hyperinflation was a serious issue at the time as it affected the majority of the people and would only serve to increase political instability as people would become restless with their standard of living. However, in the long-term it was less serious, because there was no reason at the time, as to why Germany wouldn't recover - they had a great industrial potential and a plentiful supply of natural resources, therefore making hyperinflation only a mildly serious issue for the Weimar Republic.

Similarly, threats from the left were only mildly threatening because they didn't last very long and their impact was minimal. For example, the Spartacist revolt of 1919 saw communist supporters attempt revolution by capturing Berlin. While the gov't may have viewed this initially as a serious threat, it was nullified after just 7 days by the Freikorps and army, suggesting it was not really that serious. Another threat came from the left was 'Red Bavaria'

where a group of communists had managed to take over Bavaria and declare it a separate communist state. This was much more serious than the Spartacist revolt as they managed to retain control for a whole month. However, eventually they were defeated by the Freikorps and army, who had much greater resources. Additionally, they were unable to implement and ~~real~~ reforms before this happened, suggesting that, yet again, the threat was not as significant as initially thought. Overall, the threat from the left was very mild and was dealt with by the army and Freikorps with ease. This was ~~partly~~ ^{mainly} down to the fact that the left was incredibly divided - the KPD favoured ~~reject~~ revolution and rejected the new democratic system, whereas the SPD preferred the new system and sought to gain power through the electoral system.

Finally the threats from the right posed the greatest problem to the Weimar Republic and the future of Germany. One threat from the right was the Kapp Putsch, which involved a coup, declaring Wolfgang Kapp as chancellor in 1920. This posed a serious threat to the government, who had to flee Berlin. This was because the army refused to put down the uprising as a large proportion of its supporters were part of the recently disbanded Freikorps. This shows that the army did not respect their

government or the system of democracy enough to defend it against the imposition of a military dictatorship, embarrassing the govt. Eventually, the uprising was defeated, after workers struck, cutting off water and electricity supplies to Berlin. While it had no significant long-term effects, it highlighted to the German people that the government had a lack of authority and that possibly even that the system of democracy was flawed. On the other hand, the Munich Putsch had little short-term effects, but very significant long-term implications. The Munich Putsch of 1923 involved the NSDAP planning to implement a military dictatorship by marching into Berlin and taking it by force. However, this failed to materialise and Hitler was arrested, before reaching Berlin. On the surface, it would appear that the NSDAP achieved very little, however, Hitler had learnt that taking power by force wouldn't work, he'd have to win support through the electoral system. This was only helped by his public trial, where he received a minimum sentence and gained publicity. His sentence indicated that people ~~to~~ had little respect for the government and possibly suggested that people agreed with Hitler's ~~idea's~~ ideology. This makes the Munich Putsch a very serious threat as it contributed to the rise and appeal of Hitler, who would go on to contribute to the downfall of

		Germany. Overall, the threats from the right were the most significant because they couldn't be controlled by the government, as the army supported their views (as seen in the Kapp Putsch) and the effects had both short-term and long-term implications for Germany.
		Overall, although hyperinflation was incredibly serious, impacting the lives of the majority, threats from the right were more serious in the long-term because they caused the rise of Nazism. The ^{multiple} attempted revolutions of the period of highlighted the damage done by WW1 and the Tol and also highlighted the gov't dependence on the army, who they could only depend upon to squash left-wing uprisings, making the threats from the right much more serious.

Question 2*

2* Assess the reasons for West Germany's 'economic miracle' in the years from 1949 to 1963. [30]

This was the less popular essay choice. A minority of candidates confused West Germany with the GDR and scored accordingly. While most candidates acknowledged the 'economic miracle', many were unable to pin down its exact details and wrote in general terms about progress. Better responses were able to discuss Erhard's social market economy and price controls, tax rates and policies on wages as well as the stability brought by Adenauer's leadership in the FRG. They argued that this brought a growth in productivity, declining unemployment, and improvements to the standard of living as West Germany was rebuilt after WW2. This was set alongside Germany's abundance of raw materials as well as labour, with increasing immigration from the east and its growing involvement in European affairs as well as the increasing demand brought about, in part, by the Korean War.

Candidates also discussed the role of foreign policy with Marshall Aid and its investment critical to the FRG's development in the period as well as Allied commitment to their zones after WW2. The new Deutschmark and its inclusion in Trizonia at the start of the period was noted in many responses as well as the FRG's involvement in the ECSC and the EEC as contributory factors to the 'economic miracle'.

The best responses compared these factors against each other and reached a supported judgement to reach Level 5.

Section B overview

In this section candidates are required to answer a question dealing with an historical interpretation. candidates are required to use their knowledge of the given topic to evaluate this. Candidates score highly when they consider the strengths and limitations of the interpretation using detailed and relevant knowledge of the historical context and are able to refer to the wider historical debate. Generalised knowledge will not be credited highly in this question.

Question 3

- 3 Read the interpretation and then answer the question that follows:

'The German people felt that they had no choice but to fight to the bitter end.'

From: M Fulbrook and D Williamson, *Democracy and Dictatorship in Germany 1919–1963*, 2008

Evaluate the strengths and limitations of this interpretation of the impact of the Second World War on Germany, making reference to other interpretations that you have studied.

[20]

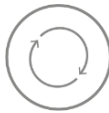
As advised in examiners' reports for previous series, candidates need clear and explicit links to the interpretation throughout their answer alongside relevant knowledge to reach Level 4 and above. The quality of knowledge used and the awareness of the context was the crucial determinant in deciding higher level responses. We continue to see essay style answers that have a limited relation to the given interpretation or deal with it rather loosely.

In terms of the strengths of the given interpretation, more successful responses were able to focus on the key phrase 'no choice' and discussed the Soviet invasion and the fear of retribution in the final stages of the war. Such responses also discussed the strength of the regime and the inability for effective resistance due to the terror apparatus that existed in Germany in this period. The best responses also used the interpretation to demonstrate loyalty to the regime and focused on how some Germans believed in the leadership's ability to win the war until the final days, with a faith in developments such as the new V2 weapons. Some thoughtful responses also noted the ideological commitment of German people who felt committed to fight, rather than fighting because they felt they had 'no choice'.

The limitations of the interpretation were largely well-handled with many focusing on the fact that there was some choice in terms of opposition and candidates were able to discuss the role of various opposition movements including the White Rose group, the Edelweiss Pirates, the Kreisau Circle and the Red Orchestra. The July Bomb plot of 1944 was well-known and was a good example of a limitation to the interpretation given. The strongest responses also examined worker apathy and strikes, absenteeism and even desertion as examples of the counter-view. This was compared to earlier years of the war where there had been a positive response from the population due to early economic benefits of the invasion of Europe. Some candidates offered the alternative interpretation that in fact most Germans were concentrating on survival rather than supporting or challenging the regime and were rewarded accordingly.

Exemplar 2 is a high Level 4 response which demonstrates good analysis of the interpretation and although there are some minor errors the candidate has the right approach to this question.

Assessment for learning



Candidates must examine the strengths and limitations of the given interpretation and refer to its contents throughout their answer. An overall judgement is not required.

Exemplar 2

3	<p>The interpretation offers the view that the German people felt that they had no choice but to fight to the end. The interpretation states this due to the years of indoctrination the German people had been subject to. Propaganda created by Goebbels was inescapable, which left the German people via the posters, newspapers and Reich Radio, which left German people with the view their only choice was to support the Führer until the end. A counter interpretation would support the view that this wasn't the case for all German people, due to the various resistance movements across the country that felt they had a choice to not fight to the latter end. These resistance groups including the Kreisau Circle, who attempted to create a new order for Germany, the Beer-Goerdeler Group who, through Operation Valkyrie attempted to assassinate Hitler in 1944, as well as various youth resistance groups, such as the Edelweiss Pirates and the White Rose group.</p>
	<p>One strength of this interpretation is that many German people wanted to fight until the end. Following the Allied bombing campaigns, which started in 1942 in Köln, over 71 cities hit with almost 400,000 civilian deaths. However, this was downplayed significantly, even after whole cities were flattened, like Dresden in 1945. The propaganda downplayed the significance of the bombings, but the German people were only made more determined.</p>

* feeling as if they had no choice but to win, after seeing what has happened to their country.

Question Part

		<p>determined to win, following what had happened to their country.* Another strength of the interpretation is that the resistance that the Nazi regime did face was weak, meaning people felt they had no choice but to fight for the Nazis, as they were too powerful to go against. The Nazi party was no stranger to opposition, but the one thing in common between all the resistance groups was how they didn't have enough support and how they failed. For example, the Beer-Goendelecher group, even if Operation Valkyrie had been successful, their attempt in Berlin were unable to take the city, and consequently failed. Again, this demonstrates the majority of the German people felt they had no choice but to fight to the end.</p> <p>One limitation of this interpretation is that, due to the number of resistance groups, there were some German people who thought they had a choice. Despite the lack of success the resistance groups had, the very existence of them under such a strict, brutal, authoritarian regime displays there were a portion of people who believed they had a choice to not fight to the bitter end. Another limitation of this interpretation is that, due to the increasing sense that a loss of the war would be imminent, many people in Germany just stopped obeying the rules of the Nazis. For example, due to the chronic food shortages that began in 1944, ration cards were no longer honoured, as well as many food shops closing</p>
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