



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2012**

History A

40402D

(Specification 4040)

Unit 2D: Germany, 1919–1945

Report on the Examination

Further copies of this Report on **the Examination** are available from: aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2012 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Copyright

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the school/college.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).
Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

40402D Germany, 1919–1945

General Issues

The general quality of the work produced by students was good and impressed the examiners. Most students demonstrated a broad knowledge of the period and an understanding of the main concepts through the key issues identified in the specification and the people and events specified. No part of the paper was misinterpreted and there were few cases where students had failed to provide an answer. Even weaker students were able to write at often considerable length on the later parts of questions 1, 2 or 3. While the main issues and trends in the German history, 1918–1945, covered by the paper seemed well understood, there were some small specific areas where students displayed weaker knowledge and understanding. This was evident in relation to the answers to Question 1(e). However, it is good to see students in the examination integrating their knowledge of the period with the historical skills they have learned in order to demonstrate convincing historical reasoning. The value of the large, colour images used in the paper was evident; they proved stimulating and accessible across the full ability range.

The demands of this paper were broadly consistent with those of last year. Both Question 1 and Questions 2 or 3 of Section B offered a manageable and largely enjoyable opportunity for all students to show what they understood, knew and could do. It was noticeable that the more able students distinguished themselves on Question 1(e) and on 2(c) or 3(c). In Section B students showed no marked preference for either Question 2 about Culture and Propaganda or Question 3 on The Nazis and Race.

Section A

Question 1(a)

The majority of students successfully comprehended and drew inferences about Weimar Germany from these sources. Knowledge of Weimar was not called for, but many students chose to use their own knowledge in this question. The majority of students reached a high Level 2, being able to draw more than one valid inference about the state of Germany before 1929. At Level 2 students were able typically to make comments about Germany being 'happy', 'had jobs', or 'getting better', 'doing well', 'being popular' or 'being successful'. It was a misconception that emerged in some responses, based on the second photograph, that caused some students to assume that people were on the streets in order to protest. Able students emphasised that there was economic prosperity, or a sense of community and common cause. There were a small minority of Level 1 responses that simply paraphrased Source B.

Question 1(b)

The majority of students showed comprehension and drew inferences about the different view of Weimar Germany after 1929 shown in the Sources C and D to those in Sources A and B. Students found the sources easy to deal with in terms of their ideas and language. The focus of the marking of this question was the inference that could be made from Sources C and D; reference to Sources A and B, or the context of these sources was acceptable, if it was implicit. The great majority of answers made explicit reference to all four sources. Some weaker answers focused too heavily upon Sources A/B.

Weaker answers often made a simple comparison between the sources based on what they said or suggested about the impression of work and unemployment in Sources A and C and for this the response gained reward at Level 2. Students made observations about the fact

that in Sources A/B the view was that Weimar was positive and booming, whereas in Sources C/D the country was negative and in trouble. A majority of students were able to reach Level 3 through correctly identifying contrasting attitudes in the two sets of sources. Able students mentioned mood of pessimism and gloom in Sources C/D that contrasted with the optimism of Source B. Some examiners noted once again that many students mixed up how and why sources differed in their responses to this question, thus they began answering Question 1(c) during their answer to Question 1(b).

Question 1(c)

In this question students had a clear target to explain why there were differences between Sources A/B and C/D. Students showed understanding of the skill being tested here and most used the differences between the authors or the time of writing to underpin their answers. The general level of thinking in answers to this question was good and led in the main to Level 2 and Level 3 marks.

Although this question elicited a full range of responses, at a basic level a number of students wanted to explain how the sources were different. A significant number of students ignored the provenance of the sources and merely described again **how** the sources provided different impressions of Weimar Germany. This approach received Level 1 marks (one-two). A misunderstanding of the times of the photographs, being labelled in the 1920s, meant that some obviously knowledgeable students tried to cover all the history of that decade in Weimar Germany and became muddled in their answers, for example, in trying to relate a positive attitude to the events of 1923.

A common feature of answers at Level 2 was to explain differences between the sources through the time difference in the production of the sources. This point was related to the Wall Street Crash and its impact on Germany in causing the Depression. The development of the time differences in detail and context usually brought Level 3 marks to the student (six-seven). The question produced surprisingly few students who appreciated that the different authors would have had different purposes and experiences. The British delegation, as a former enemy and out of their hosts' pride in Germany, might have been shown only positive aspects of life under Weimar. Further, it was pointed out their visit was relatively fleeting. In Source D on the other hand, the person speaking, von Papen, really ought to know the state of the country as he was at the centre of government.

Question 1(d)

Many students interpreted the source as a piece of Nazi propaganda and did not recognise the significance of its presence in a Social Democrat magazine. Thus, it was not easy for them to discuss the utility of the source. The other trend amongst students' responses was to focus on why Hitler was successful in elections. Examiners noted that many students based their answers around the content of the source. These answers were rewarded at Level 2 (three-four marks). It was common for answers to discuss how the Nazis were backed by big business and how this money was used to fund the Nazis' electoral expenses. However, it was pleasing to see that many students did reflect on the source's provenance. The value of the source was frequently considered to lie in the fact that it was Social Democrat in origin and given their opposition to the Nazis, this recognition conferred either truth or partiality. Students who used the content and commented on provenance were rewarded with Level 3 marks (five-six). At Level 4, there were a few sophisticated answers using the students own knowledge to integrate content and provenance in a very impressive manner, for example, noted that the businessmen who supported Hitler were the employers of the workers who supported the Social Democrats through the Trades Unions. The businessmen wanted a political counterbalance to the Communists, who threatened the system that made their profits.

Question 1(e)

There were some very good answers to this question and the question proved to be a good discriminator. The majority of students focused on the given time frame in the question and were able to explain the way in which Hitler gained total control in Germany through the Reichstag Fire, Enabling Act and the Night of the Long Knives. A number of students took the question to be a general opportunity to discuss Hitler's rise to power. When answers consisted of a few simple points or general statements about Hitler's dictatorship they were limited to Level 1 marks. Many students offered some more developed comments from their own knowledge about specific events, with a marked preference for the Reichstag Fire or the Night of the Long Knives. These answers usually received three to five marks at Level 2. Examiners noted some good answers that covered a range of factors in depth with emphasis on how each of the events was connected to the subsequent one. For students who were able to give factual support and details about several factors six to eight marks were available. At Level 4 students tended to evaluate different factors and give some weight to their relative importance. Students at this level concluded that Hitler was able to remove opposition outside, and then inside, the Nazi party through a mixture of luck, opportunism and ruthlessness.

Section B**Question 2(a)**

Many students answered this question. Compared with previous years in which a question has required knowledge of Weimar culture, this was answered well with many students scoring Level 2 marks. There were some misconceptions; a few students confused Weimar culture with the Weimar constitution, other students assumed that Weimar culture was the same as Nazi culture. However, most students reached Level 2 by showing that they recognised the nature of the art, music and films produced or popular at this time. Really good answers described how this culture arose, or was appropriate in the period after World War One or discussed how its character would be anathema to the Nazis.

Question 2(b)

This question drew many very good answers from the majority of students who tackled it. Many students relied on Source F as a 'starter' and pointed out that the burning of books deprived Germans of reading matter that the Nazis considered to be unacceptable for its ideas or the racial origin of its author. Another prominent feature of students' responses was that the burning of books was not systematic but emblematic, in that it warned citizens of what was expected and they then policed themselves by destroying banned books rather than be caught with them. At Level 3 it was usual to see students convincingly explain the way newspapers were controlled.

Question 2(c)

This question discriminated well and attracted some very knowledgeable and well explained answers. Students who knew some simple details about either the control of the German people or propaganda and culture were rewarded at Level 1 or 2, depending on whether the knowledge was used to explain or describe. Many answers were focused on factors other than culture per se such as fear, propaganda, education or the economic benefits of Nazi rule. All of these factors contributed to a good answer, which many students provided. Examiners were looking for evidence of some evaluation of the relative importance of factors at Level 3 and beyond. Usually though the conclusion, was that it was primarily through fear that support was retained. At Level 3, and beyond, students were able to show an understanding of the way in which both the carrot and the stick were employed to retain

support. Nazi labour policies were discussed and the use of the HJ. Some students appreciated how Germans weighed up a number of factors in order to maintain their support for the Nazis; able students pointed out the absence of alternatives to Nazi government.

Question 3(a)

This was a popular and straightforward question. At a simple level there was recognition that the Nazis had a particular set of racial characteristics that they wished to promote. Better Level 2 answers clearly showed that students knew that the Nazi racial policies meant to destroy inferior races, as well as produce a master race. Thus there were two related sides to Nazi racial policies. Examiners noted well-informed references to Social Darwinism.

Question 3(b)

This question gave a great deal of help in the picture provided. Source G was quite rightly 'mined' by many students who used it to comment on the opposition based around the Stauffenberg bomb plot as displayed in the picture. There were many references in answers to the White Rose, Swing Youth and Edelweiss Pirates. Some answers referred to the Jewish resistance that developed in 1943. Many answers drifted into explaining why the various groups opposed and away from how they opposed the Nazis. At Level 3 students explained in detail what the opposition groups could do. It was good to see reference to the Social Democrats and Confessing Church in high level answers. There is evidence from the responses to this question that schools would help students if they spent some more time stressing and explaining the importance of the command words in questions.

Question 3(c)

The question was straightforward and popular. At Level 1, students just had a few points to make usually about either the Holocaust or Kristallnacht. Most students had knowledge and understanding about a number of stages in the Nazis treatment of the Jews and other minorities in Germany between 1933 and 1945. Many students had a very good grasp of the significances of the Nuremberg Laws, the outbreak of World War 2 and the Wannsee Conference. Some students spent a large part of their answers detailing the treatment of people in the concentration camps; those answers were usually rewarded at Level 2.

At Level 3 students began to discuss the significance of the events that led to genocide. Students reaching Level 4 determined the mark they received by the relative significance they attached to different factors and the supporting detailed that appeared in their answers. Once again, examiners noted that some students produced outstanding responses to this question. The better answers at Levels 3 and 4 did appreciate how important to the development of the Holocaust was the secrecy, the climate of fear and suspicion, the absence of information about what was happening. This often led students to agree that Kristallnacht was the crucial moment when anti-Semitism emerged publically, and undeniably, as an official government policy and by which time, it was difficult to oppose the process. Other students pointed to the Wannsee Conference as the point at which the resources of the state were committed to the systematic industrial destruction of thousands of people.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

UMS conversion calculator: www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion