



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
January 2012**

History B 4045

**Unit 1 International Relations: Conflict and
Peace in the Twentieth Century**

Report on the Examination

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Unit 1 International Relations: Conflict and Peace in the Twentieth Century**General Comments**

The entry increased on last year and consisted of various types of students: those who were trying to raise their grade and those who had targeted January for their entry. As in summer, Topics 3 and 2 were the most popular, but in this series, Topic 1 was more popular than 4 and 5, and Topic 6 had relatively few answers.

As in summer, the 'describe' questions were marked generously and few of these caused problems, though it must be stressed that only correct factual information can be rewarded in answers to these questions. Questions 07 and 13 elicited the strongest answers while the weakest were 01 and 16. Students were often able to use specific knowledge in their answers to the source based questions, but evaluating the provenance to the same level proved to be more difficult. In the extended writing questions, there was a refreshing attempt by some students to address the focus of the question rather than simply describe the two bullet points, though some took it too far and made general explanations or attempted to assess their effect, basing their answer on little or no knowledge. Knowledge must be used to support the explanation or assessment to obtain the higher levels.

Questions**Topic 1**

- 01** It proved to be impossible to distinguish between the two agreements in students' answers and they were both marked as a whole. Many wrote generally on alliances and appeared to think that the two agreements were directly preparing for war rather than colonial agreements which sorted out past disagreements.
- 02** Some students ignored the focus of the question and simply described the Agadir Crisis, displaying adequate knowledge but not using it to comment on how it affected Britain's support for France. Answers which achieved Level 3 via the knowledge route often agreed with the interpretation and referred to the strengthening of the Entente by the naval agreement made between Britain and France after Agadir. Arguments that disagreed used their knowledge of the naval rivalry or the German attack on Belgium to prove their point. The evaluation of provenance proved to be more demanding: very few made use of the fact that it was from the front cover of the magazine which illustrated the height of the tension and French feelings and could have led people to question the view. Those who achieved Level 3 normally did so by commenting on the reasons that France was drawing attention to Germany's action.
- 03** Knowledge of the Bosnian Crisis was used to good effect by a sizeable number of students who explained why it caused the formation of the Black Hand and how it affected the relationship between the Great Powers, particularly Austria-Hungary and Germany. As usual there were those who could not resist giving long descriptions of the assassination instead of using it intelligently, like many did, to explain how Austria-Hungary could have been regarded as provoking the assassination by their choice of day and then assessing the role of the ultimatum in the outbreak of war.

Topic 2

- 04** Answers to this question were not as good as previous questions on this topic. Those who read the question carefully had few problems, usually referring to the loss of Alsace and Lorraine to France, the Polish Corridor to Poland and the Saar to the League. Some did not describe the changes and simply listed the territory Germany lost while others commented erroneously on the loss of the Sudetenland to Czechoslovakia or irrelevantly on the other terms of the Treaty.
- 05** Students were well-informed about the aims of Clemenceau and Wilson and explained the reasons for the differences in some depth to achieve Level 3. The only error tended to be some confusion between Wilson's aims and those of Lloyd George. Level 3 for the evaluation of the provenance was achieved by those who recognised that the extract was published before the start of the Peace Conference and saw it as an attempt to undermine Wilson's Fourteen Points and thus reduce their influence at the Conference.
- 06** This question attracted too many long descriptions of the crises themselves including the reasons for Japan's attack on Manchuria and Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia. The focus of the question was how the two crises weakened the League and knowledge of the events should have been used to illustrate this rather than as a means itself. In fairness, many did conclude their description by explaining briefly how the crisis weakened the League, but the best answers ignored the aims of Japan and Mussolini and explained how each step in the League's dealing with the two countries weakened it and concluded with an assessment of the overall consequences of the crises for the League.

Topic 3

- 07** This was very straightforward for most students. The most common responses were: the overturning of the Treaty of Versailles; uniting German speaking people; lebensraum and the destruction of communism; any three of which were rewarded with full marks.
- 08** The terms of the Nazi-Soviet Pact and its consequences were well known by many students and this knowledge was used to challenge the assertion in the question. There were good comments also on the aims of both Hitler and Stalin in making the Pact, all of which achieved Level 3 via the knowledge route. Those who recognised that this extract was the public face of the Pact and were able to comment on the likely audience and purpose of this as opposed to the secret clauses gained Level 3 for source evaluation.
- 09** The Anschluss was the better known of these two bullet points and a surprising number of students confused the Sudetenland with the Rhineland, or even with the events of March 1939. There were some good explanations of Hitler's use of threats and violence to achieve Anschluss, but it proved difficult for many to reach assessment by commenting on the danger of this to the future peace of Europe such as by relating it to Hitler's designs on Czechoslovakia and how Anschluss strengthened his challenge to that country. Similarly there were lengthy descriptions of Chamberlain's meetings with Hitler over the Sudetenland but much uncertainty of what happened afterwards regarding the timing of the collapse of Czechoslovakia or Britain's guarantee to Poland.

Topic 4

- 10** Answers to this question were disappointing with students frequently confusing the Marshall Plan with the Truman Doctrine or stating simply that 'they gave them money'. Those better informed were able to explain why Marshall felt that money would prevent the spread of communism and often commented on the amount of money granted or the countries which benefited and how it was used to rebuild after the war.
- 11** There were many generic evaluations of photographs in answer to this question but very few which went on to comment about the possible purpose of this particular photograph being of American origin during the airlift. Knowledge was also often used too generally in comments such as Stalin called it off because 'he realised he could not win'. Answers which reached Level 3 knowledge normally achieved it by challenging the view and explaining other reasons why Stalin called off the Blockade such as his fear of war or the atom bomb.
- 12** Students displayed good knowledge of the Korean War, but often limited their answers to a description of the events with little explanation or assessment of its threat to world peace. Those who went further often linked the events to the activities and aims of MacArthur and were able to assess its danger to world peace. NATO and the Warsaw Pact proved to be more difficult: explanation was often generalised pointing out the reasons for their existence and there were few genuine attempts at assessment of how such a division of powers could disrupt the peace.

Topic 5

- 13** A straightforward question which produced good well-informed answers, often focussing on the experiences of Gary Powers or the relationship between the leaders of USSR and USA leading to the collapse of the Paris Summit. The main problem for students was which American President was involved: there was confusion between Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy.
- 14** This subject tends to be either known very well or not at all. The question produced the weakest answers in Topic 5 and was often left blank by students who scored creditably on questions 13 and 15. Those who attempted it normally did very well by giving details of Nagy's policies to explain the reasons for the Soviet invasion and then using the information given in the attribution to comment on the purpose of the statement by Kadar.
- 15** Both these items were well-known and produced descriptive answers at the very least. Many went on to explanation, normally limited to Khrushchev's attempt to stop the exodus of skilled workers on Berlin, but often covering a variety of points on Cuba which was the better known of the two. Assessments of the Berlin Wall were few, but Cuba was assessed quite well, often in terms of how it improved relations between the powers in the 1960s.

Topic 6

- 16** Too many answers were vague and generalised, but there were some detailed answers on Reagan's renewal of the arms race and some which went beyond this and mentioned his support for the Mujaheddin and Solidarity.

- 17** Some answers used knowledge of the formation of the Trade Union Solidarity and its early struggles to challenge the view, claiming that it was simply to get better working and living conditions in Poland. Understanding of Walesa's aims and Solidarity in the later 1980s was very limited. The biggest disappointment was the failure of students to comment sensibly on the provenance and the significance of the timing of the interview.
- 18** Glasnost and Perestroika were well known, though too many answers stopped at description and were unable to go on to explain why the policies were introduced or assess their contribution to the collapse of communism by including the abandoning of the Brezhnev Doctrine and relating the policies to events in the satellite states which precipitated the collapse of communism in the USSR. Knowledge of the war in Afghanistan was limited and explanations were often restricted to general comments such as 'it cost a lot so it affected the economy of the USSR'. Very few attempted to assess how the failure of the Red Army or the effect on the Soviet economy led to the collapse of communism.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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