



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2012**

**History B**

**40451**

**(Specification 4045)**

**Unit 1: International Relations:  
Conflict and Peace in the 20th Century**

***Report on the Examination***

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## 40451 International Relations: Conflict and Peace in the 20th Century

### Introduction

It is pleasing to note that most students can produce very good answers to at least one topic. Normally this is the first they attempt to answer. Some scripts then tailed off, presumably because they either run out of knowledge, or perhaps because too much time has been spent on their first answer. It is worth noting that the 'describe' question is worth only four marks; it should be answered briefly but accurately, without any irrelevant comments. Sometimes the topic chosen for this question is a broad topic and sometimes a narrow one. In both cases full marks will be awarded for three or four accurate, relevant points that answer the question. Examples of such comments, which appeared regularly in answers and were rewarded at Level 2, are given below.

The source based questions seemed to be the biggest disappointment in this year's examination. Many students appeared to find the sources more difficult than in previous exams and evaluation of the provenance was more limited this year. When evaluating the provenance students frequently used expressions such as 'justifying', 'defending', 'winning an argument', 'trying to get support', 'ridiculing', etc. On their own, these responses are treated as 'learned responses' and qualify for Level 2 at best. In order to fully explain the purpose it is necessary to put the comment into the context of the source and the surrounding history: by explaining what was being justified and why; what was it defending against and why; how it is ridiculing and why, etc. Examples are given below in the relevant sections.

**In light of feedback from schools, the positioning of the source in this question will be changed with effect from next summer.** From June 2013 the source will appear as an integral part of the question to which it refers, that is as part of questions 02, 05, 08, 11, 14 and 17, instead of appearing at the beginning of the topic as at present. Some schools had expressed the view that some of their students had been confused by the positioning of the source and often thought it referred to the 'describe' question which appeared immediately after it. We hope the new layout resolves this concern.

The main weakness in answers to the extended writing questions is that students write irrelevantly about the topic instead of concentrating on the focus of the question. On occasions, students change the focus of the question and answer a question which may have been set on a previous exam paper. Although marks at the lower end of the scale are awarded for description, there is no need for students to describe the two bullet points. Higher marks are awarded for explanation and assessment related to the focus of the question as long as the explanation and assessment is supported by examples from the student's knowledge.

## Questions

As in 2011, the order of popularity of the topics was 3, 2, 4, 1, 5 and 6. The comparable questions in each option performed very similarly. In the describe questions, there was very little to choose between the performance of students, though the best overall answers were in response to 04, and the ones that produced the weakest average responses were 01 and 16. The best overall responses to the source based questions were to 11, the weakest to 05 and in the essay questions the strongest overall responses were to 15 and the weakest 06.

### Topic 1

#### 01

Students found this question more challenging than was expected and often struggled to obtain full marks. Those who were able to quote accurate figures of the number of Dreadnoughts each country had, or made more general comments on the advantages of Dreadnoughts, the reasons the navy was important to Britain or the reasons Germany wanted a navy were well rewarded. A common error was the belief that a 'Panther' was the German name for Dreadnought.

#### 02

Most were able to make inferences about the cartoon, though many were confused by the name Entente Cordiale and thought that it included Russia. Those who were aware of the nature of the support given by Britain to France in the Moroccan Crises and the effect that it had on Germany obtained Level 3 through knowledge. Cartoons are often difficult for students to evaluate the provenance: those who recognised that the British cartoon was ridiculing Germany and explained how it was doing this gained Level 3. A more common response was that it was British so it would want to make the Germans look bad, which obtained Level 2.

#### 03

This question was answered well. There were some good explanations of both bullet points, though many were unable to resist the temptation to describe the assassination in great detail. Better answers were able to explain how the assassination led to Austria/Hungary declaring war on Serbia, and then went on to assess the importance of this in the outbreak of the war by reference to the involvement of other powers through the alliance system. Similarly, on the Schlieffen Plan, there were many who wasted time explaining why the plan failed instead of linking this to the involvement of Britain and the outbreak of war. A common misconception was that the Schlieffen Plan was public knowledge in the years before the war, when in fact it is doubtful if even the Kaiser knew of its existence until after the assassination. The best answers not only assessed the two bullet points, but reached a judgement normally based on the lines that the assassination caused the initial outbreak of the war and the Schlieffen Plan came after the outbreak and simply extended the war to the west.

**Topic 2****04**

This question required students to display their knowledge of the War Guilt Clause, how it was linked to reparations and the Reparations Settlement. Any points on these were rewarded, such as the effect of the War Guilt Clause and the detailed amount of reparations fixed, as well as the thinking behind both items. Unfortunately, many saw this question as an opportunity to reproduce their knowledge of all the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, which did not address the question.

**05**

Many did not understand the term 'self-determination', several confusing it with isolation. However, many did possess good knowledge of the Fourteen Points and were able to use this to challenge the question; explaining that the League of Nations was Wilson's main aim or discussing others such as disarmament, freedom of the seas and the ending of secret treaties. When examining the provenance of the source, Level 2 was reached by many who pointed out that Wilson was trying to get support for his aims, but only a few took this further by placing it into context and relating it to the opposition that there was in the USA towards involvement in European affairs.

**06**

This question was focused on the failure of League of Nations in Abyssinia; it was seen by a good number of students as a general question on the failure of the League. This led to long irrelevant accounts of the Manchurian Crisis and the reasons for Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia. There were some good explanations of the actions of Britain and France which referred to their policy on sanctions, the Suez Canal and the Hoare Laval Pact. The best were able to assess the effect of these actions on the collapse of the League over Abyssinia. Explanations of the absence of the USA from the League usually centred on its effect on the League's sanctions. Assessment normally compared the strength of the USA with that of Britain and France after the First World War, or commented on the effect of the actions of Britain and France on American trade with Italy during the crisis.

**Topic 3****07**

There was a wide variety of points which qualified for Level 2 in answer to this question. Relevant points went back to 1934 with the murder of Dollfuss, the opposition of Mussolini ending with the Spanish Civil War and the Rome Berlin Axis. There were some detailed accounts of the takeover of 1938, which included the roles played by Schuschnigg, Seyss-Inquart and Hitler, as well as accurate figures of the plebiscite; however, this was sometimes confused with the earlier plebiscite in the Saar.

**08**

Most answers were able to reach Level 2 by making the connection between Munich and Chamberlain's policy of appeasement. Those who were able to give accurate information about the nature of Chamberlain's meetings with Hitler, or the agreement he made with Hitler after the Munich Agreement, obtained Level 3 through their use of knowledge. Similarly, explanations of the betrayal of Czechoslovakia or the importance of the absence of the USSR were rewarded at Level 3. In order to obtain Level 3 by examining the purpose, it was not sufficient to merely state that he was 'defending' or 'justifying' his policy or 're-assuring'

people that there would not be a war; these answers were rewarded at Level 2. For Level 3, these statements had to be put into context by explaining either the opposition to Chamberlain in Parliament or how close to war Britain had come in 1938.

## **09**

Both these topics were well known by many students who were able to link them to the outbreak of the war and produce good, well-thought out answers. There were the usual misconceptions about who owned the Rhineland in 1936 and references to how the remilitarisation fulfilled Hitler's aim of lebensraum, but many were able to explain why Britain and France did not oppose it, how this gave Hitler the confidence to pursue his other policies and then assessed how this led to war. Explanations of the Nazi-Soviet Pact were mostly based on the reasons why Hitler and Stalin signed the Pact and the advantages they hoped it would give them. Those who went on to reach assessment normally explained the British guarantee to Poland, and how the invasion of Poland, which had been planned in the Pact, led to the outbreak of war.

## **Topic 4**

### **10**

Too many answers to this question concentrated on the Blockade itself instead of the Airlift which was the focus of the question. They often proceeded to write about the Airlift but had wasted time. On the Airlift itself, there were many points which were adjudged to be worth Level 2 such as: the nature of the air corridors; the airports used for the airlift; nature and amount of goods brought to West Berlin; the number of flights; the length of the Airlift; its dangers and the number of deaths.

### **11**

Several students misunderstood the cartoon and thought that the figure in it was Stalin and he was knocking down the line of dollars. Level 2 was obtained by those who made inferences from the cartoon pointing out the differences between Western and Eastern Europe and the significance of the line of dollars. Sound knowledge of the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Aid enabled answers to reach Level 3, though there was some confusion between the two. There were some good evaluations of provenance. These referred to the source being a British cartoon and went beyond the Level 2 answer of Britain being an ally of the USA so will support them by putting this into the context of the Marshall Plan and explaining how Britain received the most help, therefore was more likely to want to support Truman and the USA.

### **12**

The first of the two bullet points seemed to act as a magnet for weaker students as everyone appeared to be able to write something about the dangers of nuclear weapons. The focus of the question was 'threat to world peace', yet the focus of many answers appeared to have been 'which would cause greater destruction'. There were some explanations of the threat of the arms race and the development of a nuclear deterrent. When supported by evidence, this latter point often reached assessment and sometimes even judgement when compared with the Korean War. Explanations of the second bullet point included why the USA, China and the USSR got involved, while assessments included the dangers of the Cold War spreading to the Far East and the possible result of MacArthur's advance on China.

**Topic 5****13**

There were some good accounts of the reforms of Nagy and why this prompted the Soviet intervention. Students benefited from the uncertainty of the number of deaths during the rising and any reasonably accurate number quoted was credited. Other facts deemed worthy of credit were: details of the fighting; the length of the fighting; the number of refugees; the fate of Nagy and the name of his successor.

**14**

Students often confused the Prague Spring with the Hungarian Rising of 1956. Having two distinct questions with clearly defined dates on the exam paper was designed to be of help to students. Sadly, there was a sizeable number who clearly felt that Prague was in Hungary and managed to confuse the details of the two events. Several also did not appear to realise that the source was taken from a radio broadcast in 2010 and concentrated on the idea of censorship rather than recognising that the soldier was relating how they had felt in 1968, and how the attitude of the Czech people puzzled them. Those who clearly understood the source wrote excellent answers. They tended to use their knowledge of the attitude of the Warsaw Pact countries to the Prague Spring and the nature of the Brezhnev Doctrine, and then went on to explain the limited nature of the evidence because the soldiers of 1968 would only know what they had been told by their superiors.

**15**

Many students chose to answer this question by analysing the roles of the two leaders, which was an excellent way of approaching it. Unfortunately, some only analysed their roles in a simple manner such as stating that Kennedy gained prestige because he made Khrushchev back down, without supporting this with evidence. Those who made intelligent use of their knowledge of the crisis by comparing Kennedy's standing in the world after his apparent failures at the Bay of Pigs and over the Berlin Wall, with the acclaim he received as a result of the success of the quarantine he placed on Cuba were well rewarded. Similarly, with Khrushchev it was not sufficient to state that he 'lost face' as many did, without supporting this with evidence. Those who developed this by explaining what he was trying to do with what he actually achieved were rewarded, as were those who assessed that Khrushchev gained more as a result of his gain of an ally in Cuba and the removal of the missiles from Turkey. Many appeared to be unable to select the knowledge that was relevant to the question and wrote lengthy descriptions of the crisis, often including accounts of the Bay of Pigs.

**Topic 6****16**

Students found it surprisingly challenging to come up with three ideas that focused on the question. The most common responses covered were: passive resistance; peaceful protests; strikes; negotiations and the 21 demands; support from RC Church and the visit of Pope John Paul. Too many answers strayed into the post 1980 period.

**17**

This question produced a lot of Level 2 general references to oil, some implying that there was oil in Afghanistan, and the expansion of Communist influence. Better answers achieved Level 3 by making reference to the expansion of Communist influence in the Gulf area and the threat to American oil supplies from the region, or to the Soviet attempt to consolidate their influence in an area where they had long held the upper hand but were now under threat. Evaluation of the source was often bland and disappointing such as American therefore biased, trying to gain support, trying to please the American people, etc. Occasionally, students did see the purpose as preparing the ground for future action, such as support of the Muslim rebels and were awarded Level 3.

**18**

Students were well informed on the policies of both these leaders, though some focused on which leader played the greater part in ending communism rather than the Cold War. Knowledge of Reagan's arms programme was often detailed, and most answers were able to explain how he was able to spend the USSR out of the arms race and the impact that this had on Gorbachev. Disappointingly, relatively few students connected Reagan's policies to the end of the Cold War by assessing how they prepared the ground for his more conciliatory later moves, or made Gorbachev more open to seek some agreement. Descriptions of Gorbachev's policies usually included Glasnost and Perestroika and went on to explain the impact of these policies on the satellite states. Some concentrated on Gorbachev's need to reduce the arms budget and its impact. More students reached assessment on Gorbachev by making clear connections between his policies and the end of the Cold War, such as the USSR could no longer match the USA militarily and therefore were prepared to negotiate. Some were able to make a judgement on the contribution of the two leaders on the lines of how Reagan's policies drove Gorbachev to make changes which led to the end of the Cold War, therefore Reagan was the more important.

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