



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2012**

**History B**

**40452**

**(Specification 4045)**

**Unit 2: 20th Century Depth Studies**

***Report on the Examination***

---

Further copies of this Report on the Examination are available from: [aqa.org.uk](http://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.

## 40452 20th Century Depth Studies

### Introduction

This was the second examination for this unit in this specification. Students seem to have coped well with the question paper. Virtually no rubric errors were reported, though there were the usual missing (or inaccurate) question numbers, and a minority of students who failed to set out their answers clearly. This was in sharp contrast to the vast majority who produced answers that were well set out and usually easy to read. Many used paragraphs accurately, and this certainly helps examiners to give the maximum credit possible. Many wrote in clear English with appropriate good spelling and specialist vocabulary, though this, of course, was a challenge to some. Timing of answers did not seem to be much of an issue; there were very few unfinished scripts, and most of those who were clearly rushing towards the end had wasted time in Section A providing information that was not required.

The standard seemed high in many schools, with the most able students gaining very high marks, including some with 60 out of 60. Those students of lesser ability still seemed able to cope with the structure of the question paper and understood the demands of the questions, even if their responses were sometimes very limited. Sometimes these limited responses arose from possessing very little knowledge, but equally – and frustratingly to the examiner – some were unable to use their knowledge in relevant ways.

In Section A by far the most popular topic was Topic 3 (USA in 1920s), taken by nearly two-thirds of all students. Weimar Germany was more popular than the Russian Revolution. In Section B the most popular topic was Topic 5 (Hitler's Germany), followed, in order of popularity, by Depression and New Deal, Vietnam, US Civil Rights, and Stalin's USSR. Northern Ireland and the Arab-Israel options attracted a very small percentage of students each.

**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, 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.

### Section A

Many teachers had clearly trained their students very well to cope with the 4-mark question which tests inferences and not own knowledge. Some students strayed into using knowledge, whilst at the same time using words such as 'suggests' or 'infers'. Some students did not seem to be adequately prepared, and off-loaded considerable chunks of their knowledge, with no attempt to make inferences from the source provided. In these instances, often any deductions or inferences made arose from outside knowledge rather than the source content itself. Some students seem to have been taught to paraphrase the content of the source first, and then move on to making inferences. This produces answers that are too long. All that is needed is one or two clear inferences without going through the 'Level 1 stage' first. Only a few lines are needed.

The 6-mark questions were intended to test the ability to provide explanations. Sometimes here the temptation was to describe at great length the background to the situation, for example, the history of the Ku Klux Klan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although the emphasis in good answers was often a little too much on describing rather than explaining, many students showed considerable knowledge and understanding.

In the 10-mark utility questions, the written sources frequently led to problems for students in organising their answers. Too often an excessive amount of time and space was spent in paraphrasing the content of the source and commenting on it. Most of this was inevitably judged to be Level 1 or low Level 2. Only later in the answer did students move on to higher levels of skills. Often ‘provenance’ was virtually ignored, or answered by basic comments such as ‘it was written at the time and so is reliable’.

### **Topic 1: From Tsardom to Communism: Russia, 1914–1924**

The standard of answers was often high on this topic, which reflects the ability of the students taking this topic.

#### **Question 01**

Students often strayed beyond the content of the source into their own knowledge, often writing far too much as a result. Some answers showed very clear inferences, for example, about declining living standards.

#### **Question 02**

Many students were very knowledgeable about the events of 1917 that involved the Bolsheviks. However, many answers merely described the events (gaining top Level 2). For Level 3 an explanation is required: in this case, explaining the significance of the events for the Bolsheviks’ success. Some strayed too much into explaining the weaknesses of the Provisional Government. For some weaker students there was confusion with the Civil War, which was the focus of the following question.

#### **Question 03**

As stated above, many students wrote excessively about the content of the source, usually agreeing without much elaboration. However, when answers moved on to other details and reasons for the weaknesses of the Whites, Level 3 was quite frequently attained. Provenance proved to be rather more difficult because of the complexity of a US general (a supposed ally of the Whites) criticising Kolchak. More astute students, however, saw the possibilities here of Graves being lukewarm towards the campaign and sensing that the US mission was doomed to failure, especially as the objectives were never made clear beyond being anti-communist.

### **Topic 2: Weimar Germany, 1919–1929**

Able students coped well with the three questions, but the general comments made in the introduction frequently applied.

#### **Question 04**

Simple inferences were sometimes made very clearly, but often students could not resist providing the background to the source.

#### **Question 05**

As with Question 02, answers here sometimes described the facts and ignored the stem of the question – i.e. ‘Explain the changes...’. Those who could explain the significance of the various events gained full marks easily. Some students included material before

1924, for example hyperinflation details or the Rapallo Treaty of 1922. The Ruhr crisis, starting in 1923, was relevant in terms of its resolution in 1924–5. The Dawes and Young Plans were only relevant if linked to changes in international relations, and frequently there were not. Some students had problems with sequencing the events.

**Question 06**

Whilst there were some excellent answers to this question, many students struggled with the date of the newspaper extract (1922). Many assumed that this was after the hyperinflation crisis and therefore embarked on erroneous arguments, taking the content of the source at face value. These students often spent many words paraphrasing the content of the source, and agreeing with it on the assumption that it was when Stresemann had restored prosperity. Comparatively few seemed to be able to describe the economic situation in Germany at the beginning of the Weimar Republic, and to put the source in its true context. However, others could do this, explaining the economic weaknesses and the political instability of 1919–1921, and then moving on to a provenance answer which looked at the possible bias and motives of the letter writer. Many students wrongly stated that the source was from an article in the newspaper and missed the subtlety of it coming from a letter which the newspaper published. Events in the future (i.e. beyond 1922) could only be used to show the direction that Germany was going, and this argument was sometimes put forward extremely well.

**Topic 3: The Roaring 20s: USA, 1918–1929**

The three questions in this topic were all tackled well, though the average marks were slightly lower than for Topics 1 and 2. These seemed to be more weaker students answering this topic.

**Question 07**

Many students were able to make simple, or even complex, inferences and gain full marks. Once students realised that increasing number of cinema goers would reflect higher living standards and that a picture house in nearly every town meant that nearly everyone had easy access to films, examiners could quickly award 4 marks. However, many were determined to use their own knowledge and provide factual examples of film stars of the silent movies, thereby making the answer excessively long. It is also worth stressing that there is no need to describe the content of the source first: students should move straight into making inferences.

**Question 08**

Some excellent answers were seen to this question, though some concentrated on factual description rather than focusing on 'explaining the effects.' These answers were concerned mostly with dress and activities, and often gained Level 2. Answers varied considerably between schools, depending on exactly what had been taught, but any relevant approach will be credited fully. For example, many focused on the Ku Klux Klan and its attitudes towards Black Americans; others also featured the wider aspirations of the Klan towards the perceived evils of society, including gambling and alcohol. Attitudes towards immigrants could also be credited so long as this was made relevant. Unfortunately, often students were only too keen to off-load all their factual knowledge of the restrictions in 1917, 1921 and 1924. Some excellent answers used the crisis of the Ku Klux Klan in 1925 as a watershed of their influence and therefore sought to evaluate the varying degree of influence the Ku Klux Klan actually had within the decade.

**Question 09**

Many answers here were excellent on the provenance, using minimal knowledge to explain the context of the source and its purpose. Many answers also successfully followed the 'knowledge' route, featuring details of the USA's involvement in the First World War and its aftermath, and giving results of the November 1919 Presidential election that substantiated

the argument that, on balance, Americans were longing for a return to isolationism. Some weaker students became muddled – sometimes over the political parties and personnel involved. Others thought that the weaknesses of the League of Nations had already become obvious and used these to explain why the USA was right in not joining. Others were keen to write about tariffs and Fordney-McCumber without making the details relevant to the focus of the question.

## **Section B**

The 8-mark ‘describe’ questions were often well-answered. Most students managed to remember to refer to the source, and where students wrote about the content of the source without specifically mentioning the fact, this was accepted as fulfilling the rubric of the question, for example in Question 16, where answers included descriptions of walking to work, this was taken as using the source, even though it might, of course, be own knowledge. The instruction to ‘describe’ means just that. It is accepted that some answers also include elements of explanation, and this cannot be avoided, especially on some topics. However, the main reward given by examiners is for factual details. Some students are trying to evaluate the provenance of the source, but this is not required in this question, and some spend too long describing what is in the source.

The 12-mark questions showed that most students had been prepared well. Most realised the need for a balanced answer, even if sometimes the arguments and facts presented were thin on the ground. However, some answers would have benefited from a clear plan because the answer meandered from ‘agree’ to ‘disagree’ and back again. Worse still, some answers contained a sizeable chunk of detailed knowledge where it was not clear how it was being used as part of an argument. In addition, teachers should note the wording of this mark scheme. Although it involves no difference in principle, the revision is intended to ensure that it is easier to get into Level 3 rather than being ‘capped’ at the top of Level 2, and therefore helping to produce greater discrimination in the marking. Students from some schools tried a sophisticated approach that usually did not work. This involved, for the ‘agree’ part of the answer, writing ‘Some historians say that...’ and then for the ‘disagree’ part of the answer writing ‘however, other historians disagree with this...’ This is usually wrong in principle because specific historians are not being named. What would have been far more preferable was the realisation that most historians try to give a balanced view, even if they show some degree of bias in their emphasis. At GCSE it is not expected that students should name historians with contrasting views, even where they exist. This was particularly misguided on Question 15, where historians all agree that the New Deal partially achieved its aims - they just disagree on the exact extent. Having written all this by way of concern, it is important to emphasise that the overall standard of essay writing shows much detailed knowledge, understanding and the ability to organise an answer that, in terms of style, would not look out of place at A-level.

## **Topic 4: Stalin's Dictatorship USSR, 1924–1941**

### **Question 10**

This was often well answered on the Five Year Plans. The subject of the source, Magnitogorsk, was frequently known with relevant details provided, as well as details on the three plans. Some answers went on to contrast success with suffering and shortfalls, which, whilst not specifically asked for, was credited. Many students gained a mark within Level 3. Some provided lengthy descriptions of Collectivisation, which could only be credited if it was being referred to in the context of industrialisation.

### **Question 11**

Many answers were good, though some students were disturbed by the phrase 'cult of personality'. Better answers weighed this against the Purges and the Terror. Some answers were more focused on how Stalin built up a dictatorship, with little detail on the aspects of personality cult (statues, poems, music, paintings, etc). Some answers mistakenly concentrated on the 1920s, and this detail was irrelevant unless it was integrated into an argument about the nature of Stalin's propaganda.

## **Topic 5: Hitler's Germany, 1929–1939**

### **Question 12**

The preamble sentence provided before the actual question was intended to delineate exactly which sections of narrative were relevant. However, many students were unfortunately unable to make use of this, and either wrote about events before 1929 (including the Munich Putsch) and after 1932, with many answers referring to how Hitler became a dictator in 1933–34. The election result of March 1933 (with the Nazis getting 44% of the votes) was often used in the context of 1932, and there were confusions between this and the Presidential election of that year. However, those who were able to focus on the years 1928–1932 were able to describe the effects of the Wall Street Crash, the weaknesses of the Weimar governments, and the methods used by the Nazis to gain support. Those who were able to do this with some details reached Level 3 easily.

### **Question 13**

This question was frequently answered very well. The best answers showed much analysis, backed up with factual details. The less successful answers included description on aspects such as 'education', 'youth' and 'women' – and then tried to relate the factual knowledge to the quotation, sometimes with contradictory results. Some students thought that Hitler's solution to the 6 million unemployment problem was achieved entirely by taking women out of work, and there were mixed views on whether this was a benefit to women or not. Sometimes Jews predominated too much (with students obviously ready for an essay on the topic). Reference to Blacks appeared too often, sometimes with confusion with the USA; that aspect of the race issue was not significant in Germany at that time. Some of the most impressive answers differentiated in terms of social groups – one way to gain a Level 4 mark. The other obvious way was to differentiate between the mid-1930s and the late-1930s when the police state was more overt.



**Topic 6: Depression and the New Deal USA, 1929–1941****Question 14**

Frequently this was poorly answered, possibly because students from some schools had not studied this aspect of the specification, and were only prepared to write about what Hoover did not do rather than what he did. Many wrote about Hoover's reluctance to act via rugged individualism and *laissez-faire*, and/or described the effects of the Depression. Some wrote about the alphabet agencies of the New Deal, leaving themselves little to add in response to the next question.

**Question 15**

Many students were able to write detailed answers. High marks were awarded to a variety of approaches, for example: contrasting the positives and the negatives within the 1930s; contrasting the 1930s with the early 1940s; explaining the significance of the dip in 1937-8; or taking each of the three Rs in turn and evaluating the extent to which each aim was achieved. This last approach was often the most likely to result in a Level 4 mark, and some answers were extremely sophisticated in their arguments and use of precise statistical evidence. Some answers included a lengthy section about sources of opposition to the New Deal, but this was usually not made relevant to the overall argument. Some answers ignored the aims, and just wrote about how successful various alphabet agencies were. These answers were, of course, limited to a maximum of Level 3.

**Topic 7: Race Relations in the USA, 1955–1968****Question 16**

This was often well-answered with accurate details, though some answers were very vague on the circumstances leading to the ending of the bus boycott. Often for students of moderate abilities this was their best answer.

**Question 17**

Many excellent answers were seen, with evaluations of the role of Martin Luther King set against other factors which encouraged successes in the Civil Rights movement. However, some answers were really potted biographies with little analysis, and some answers credited him with avenues in which he was not directly involved, eg Freedom Rides. Some answers were far too general and read like eulogies rather than sharp analyses of his contribution. Some students used material from the 1950s which was irrelevant unless it was presented as providing favourable conditions for successes in the 1960s. Some answers that were good on the role of King were much weaker on the other factors, with Malcolm X, Black Power, and the Civil Rights Acts being mentioned rather than developed as arguments.

**Topic 8: USA and Vietnam, 1964–1975****Question 18**

This was often answered well, with a variety of aspects mentioned, thus gaining a high mark in Level 2. Some students were able to provide more details and gain a Level 3 mark. Very few answers only achieved Level 1.

**Question 19**

Some answers were excellent, with detailed analysis of media coverage as opposed to other reasons. The basic problem, however, for many students was how to divide media factors from non-media factors, as most of the latter were heavily reported in the media. Many students appeared totally unaware of this conundrum, and scattered the various factors into one side or the other without much apparent logic, for example, the shooting at Kent State University was sometimes put in the 'disagree' category, even though it only became famous because the massacre was reported extensively in the media. Only occasionally did students attempt to tie in all the relevant aspects under the media umbrella. In spite of this, many answers were very detailed, some focusing considerably on the anti-war movement within the USA, whilst others concentrated more on the actual fighting and how it was reported. Some very good answers differentiated between the broadly supportive media in the mid-1960s compared with the predominantly anti-war media from 1968 onwards after the Tet Offensive and My Lai.

**Topic 9: Britain: The challenge in Northern Ireland, 1960–1986****Question 20**

This was often well-answered, though not always with much detail. Some answers were almost exclusively concerned with the events of Bloody Sunday, which could gain a good mark within Level 2.

**Question 21**

Some answers were very good, comparing the impact of the failures of Terence O'Neill with other factors, such as the inequalities in the economic and social backgrounds within Northern Ireland. Some answers strayed beyond the 1960s and included Bloody Sunday. Others contained too much background before the 1960s.

**Topic 10: The Middle East: 1956–1979****Question 22**

For the able students answering this question it was easy to get a mark within Level 3. Many answers had precise chronological descriptions of the days of this short war; many also included relevant immediate background to the Israeli attack.

**Question 23**

This was often answered well, even though details on what was actually agreed were often scarce to find. Good answers concentrated more on the symbolic importance of the meeting, and contrasting it with other situations and events that either helped or hindered the peace process. Many of the answers used events after 1979 to place the Camp David agreements in context, and this was fully accepted by examiners as a valid approach. Others used items from the specification, such as the Yom Kippur War, the role of the Yasser Arafat, the oil war, and the previous meeting between Sadat and Begin.

**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](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion).