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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2021

Pearson Edexcel GCSE  
In History (1HIA and 1HIB 31)

Paper 3: Modern depth study (1HIA and  
1HIB 31)

Option 31: Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39

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November 2021

Publications Code 1HI0\_31\_2111\_ER

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# PE Report Paper 31, Nov 2021

The small number of entries for this paper means that it is difficult to draw conclusions about candidates' overall performance, although the answers seen suggest that this paper was taken by students of the full range of ability. There were some blank answers but this seems to have been as a result of lack of knowledge rather than problems in completing the paper within the time allowed.

## Question 1

There was a range of valid inferences made in answer to the question. Many candidates inferred that Hitler and the Nazis blamed the Communists, that the Nazis reacted quickly, that they seemed to have anticipated a situation like this and prepared for it, and that they reacted with violence. A number of answers made comments about Hitler ordering communist officials to be shot but this was stated in the source and therefore this was not an inference. It is important that candidates focus on the issue about which they are asked to make inferences, for example while inferences about Hitler's reactions were accepted, answers which did not make inferences about how the Nazis reacted and instead made inferences about the police, without linking that to the Nazis' reaction, failed to score. Answers using own knowledge about the Reichstag Fire also cannot be rewarded.

## Question 2

In Question 2, the stimulus points are usually intended to remind candidates to cover different aspects of content and the full timescale of the question. The best answers here covered different problems ranging throughout the years 1919-23. However, a number of answers included information about the Dawes Plan or the Young Plan, which were both beyond the date range in the question, while others confused the economic problems of 1923 with the Depression of 1929.

Candidates do not need to include the stimulus points in their answer but they do need to cover three aspects of content in order to show breadth in their answer and to access the higher marks. They should also realise that information in the sources and interpretations for Question 3 is unlikely to be relevant and any attempt to use such details in this question is likely to mean that those sections of the answer are irrelevant and the answer then lacks coherence.

In this question, candidates had good knowledge of the Treaty of Versailles and of the problem of hyperinflation but were less confident when writing about the Weimar Constitution. Some answers were descriptive, for example providing details about the Spartacists, the Kapp Putsch and the Munich Putsch but failed to show the relevance of the information being stated or to address the focus on causation.

### **Question 3**

Questions on this paper cover all the Assessment Objectives but over half of the available marks are for question 3, which focuses on sources and interpretations. It is therefore important that candidates appreciate the difference between sources and interpretations, and the focus of different parts of question 3.

#### Question 3a

When evaluating the sources in Question 3a, candidates should appreciate that high scoring answers will consider the value of the content in the light of an aspect of its provenance and contextual knowledge while lengthy answers covering only the value of detail in the sources will be limited to mid-Level 2.

Some candidates offered good comments about the content and provenance of the sources but failed to include any comments based on own knowledge, which prevented the answer reaching Level 3. However, a number of answers simply stated the sources were useful and then reworded the content of Source B and described Source C, whereas candidates should be able to explain how the information in the sources could be used to answer the enquiry in the question. Repeating the election figures from Source B is simply demonstrating comprehension of the source, whereas a comment explaining why that information is relevant to an enquiry about the extent of support for the Nazis is showing how information from the source could be selected and used to answer the enquiry. For example, a comment could explain that the amount of votes for the Nazis in comparison to the votes for the Social Democrats is evidence of the very limited support the Nazis had on a national scale.

There were also some answers which tended to dismiss a source as not being useful because of information it did not contain. Since the question asks candidates to evaluate the usefulness of a source, it can be valid to note the limitations of a source but these points need to be used in an overall evaluation of the usefulness of the source; an answer which focuses on 'missing' information without weighing the positive aspects of the source, is unlikely to score highly.

When considering the provenance of the sources, a number of answers made valid comments about the author of Source B providing an outsider's perspective or the support shown in Source C possibly being unrepresentative. However, candidates should be aware that simple or generic statements are unlikely to be rewarded, for example the claim that a source is biased needs to be supported with evidence of that bias. They should also understand that reliability is one of the factors affecting the usefulness of a source but usefulness is a much broader issue and unreliable sources can still be very useful.

Candidates who tried to include contextual knowledge often seemed confused about chronology and wrote about the election campaigns in the years 1929-32, or the situation after 1933.

### Question 3b

In this question, candidates are asked to identify a difference in the overall view being offered in the interpretations; these do not necessarily contradict each other but do provide alternative views. Many answers recognised that the two interpretations offered different views about whether support for the Nazis increased during the years 1924-28 and could select detail from the two interpretations to demonstrate that difference. However, some answers did not recognise the focus of the question on support for the Nazis and simply compared the comments in the interpretations about Hitler or about Nazi tactics. There were also many confused answers which thought that the Nazis were in power at this time or that Interpretation 1 said the Nazis did win power in the 1928 elections. Some candidates did not seem to appreciate the difference between sources and interpretations and thought that Interpretation 2 was written by a German, who was present in the years 1933-45.

### Question 3c

It is important that candidates recognise the relationship between questions 3b and 3c. Having identified that the two interpretations offer different views, candidates are asked to suggest a reason why these different views have been reached. They should be able to support their answer with reference to the interpretations. Where answers suggested that the authors had placed weight on different sources, candidates could easily score the full 4 marks by linking details in the interpretations with details in Sources B and C.

Answers which suggested the authors had researched and written from different perspectives also usually scored 4 marks because they could use details from the interpretations to show the difference in perspectives. In this case, they could show that the author of Interpretation 1 seemed to want to explain how the reorganisation of the Nazi Party and targeting of specific groups resulted in increased support, while the author of Interpretation 2 focused on the positive attitude towards democracy and the Weimar Republic after 1924, and the consequent move away from the Nazis, even though Hitler was renouncing violence. However, the explanation needs to be rooted in the interpretations, so assumptions based on the author or the date the interpretation was produced have to be supported by reference to details within the interpretations. Generic answers based on the nature of the interpretation, such as the suggestion that a website is automatically unreliable, are invalid.

Unfortunately, many answers simply described the two interpretations, identifying the difference in views, or treated them as sources and made comments about reliability or usefulness.

### Question 3d

This question is the final part of a process which has considered how useful sources are, how and why interpretations differ and now candidates are asked if they agree with the view in Interpretation 2. Here again, candidates need to recognise that they are not being asked to treat the interpretation as a source and evaluate its reliability or usefulness but to explain whether they think the historian has offered a valid view.

In general, candidates understood that they were expected to reach a judgement after having reviewed both interpretations and linked details from the interpretations to contextual knowledge. However, some answers attempted to discuss the support for the Nazis without any reference to the interpretations. This approach misses the focus of the question, which is about making a judgement on the view offered in Interpretation 2. In other cases, the contextual knowledge used was sometimes out of period, covering the period 1929-33 or even the period of the Nazi regime from 1933 onwards.

Some candidates seemed to think the question asked whether Interpretation 2 supported the Nazis and these answers were often very confused. Other answers were based solely on the consideration of one interpretation, which limited the marks available since the question explicitly instructs candidates to use both interpretations in their answer.

At the highest level, candidates are expected to offer precise analysis of the interpretations, indicating how those differences of view are conveyed. This can be achieved in various ways, for example through a discussion of language and tone, the selection or deployment of detail, different emphasis etc.

It is expected that candidates will reach a judgement when answering this question and the strongest candidates developed their evaluation throughout the answer, creating a consistently argued response. Less successful answers offered points to support the views expressed in interpretation 2, then used interpretation 1 to challenge those views, before reaching the view that interpretation 2 was 'somewhat accurate' or saying that they 'partially agreed with the view in Interpretation 2. In these answers, there was little sense of evaluation, simply an explanation of the different views, with the acknowledgement that each had some valid points. The strongest answers to Q3d, therefore, focused clearly on the interpretations themselves, integrating evaluation while reviewing the alternative views and coming to a substantiated judgement. Candidates who focused exclusively on the view provided in interpretation 2 and used this as a basis for an essay based on their own knowledge were less successful.

### **Conclusion**

There were some answers where candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge in well-structured answers. However, many answers lacked detailed knowledge or did not focus on the specific question.

The following points should be noted:

- While there was good knowledge of some topics, candidates cannot rely on knowing just a few key topics and hoping to use that information whatever question is asked.
- Candidates need to recognise the specific focus of the question so that the information being offered is shaped to meet the demands of the question rather than simply describing a situation or including irrelevant material.
- Candidates should also ensure they address the time period in the question and be secure in their own knowledge of the chronology of key events so that they are able to select relevant details.
- Candidates should appreciate the difference between sources and interpretations and be aware that interpretations are constructed by historians in order to offer their view of events.
- In all parts of Question 3, it is helpful to be explicit about the source or interpretation being discussed.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar were broadly accurate and many answers used specialist terms with confidence but a poor standard of handwriting made a number of answers difficult to mark and exacerbated the difficulty in understanding a badly-expressed answer.

The SPaGST marks may be affected if there are weaknesses in these areas:

- Appropriate use of capital letters
- Correct use of apostrophes
- Weak grammar ('would of', 'based off of') and casual language, which is not appropriate in an examination
- Paragraphs: failure to structure answers in paragraphs not only affects the SPaGST mark, but may also make it difficult for the examiner to identify whether three different aspects have been covered in question 2, or how well analysis and evaluation is developed in question 3.