

**THE BELFAST BLITZ**

**COURSEWORK  
ASSIGNMENT**

## GCSE HISTORY COURSEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

### Teacher Information

#### *Introduction:*

These assignments comprise sources, questions and mark schemes which will enable your pupils to fulfil the coursework requirements in history for Edexcel Foundation specifications for examination from summer 2003. You may use these assignments as they stand. They have been designed to assess the full range of grades targeted by the syllabus (Grades G-A\*). Assistance may be given in class to aid the comprehension of the sources.

You may also adapt these assignments if wished by:

- providing additional or replacement sources
- providing additional or replacement questions.

However, if you wish to make changes you should submit these to the Edexcel Foundation for approval to ensure that revised sources or questions give candidates appropriate opportunity to meet the targets specified at the appropriate level.

#### *Management of the assignment:*

The assignment has been designed to accommodate some flexibility of classroom practice. The following points should be borne in mind:

- Although all the questions *may* be tackled as part of a single task, this is not necessary. The timing of individual questions within an assignment may be staggered over a period of time and integrated into the programme of study.
- Candidates may use the sources provided in the pack as part of their preparation for Assignment 1 but this is not a requirement.
- Your candidates should draw upon their contextual knowledge when using the sources for Assignment 2. The historical content listed below should be familiar to candidates before they attempt to answer the questions.

# The Belfast Blitz

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This assignment should arise from a teaching programme designed to occupy approximately half a term. Before candidates begin this assignment they should have knowledge of:

- The economy and society of Northern Ireland during the 1930s
- Northern Ireland's contribution to the war effort
- Preparations for war, including civilian defence
- The impact of the war on Northern Ireland.

## Introduction

Belfast was bombed for the first time in April 1941. By then most cities in Britain had been bombed on a number of occasions and more than 200,000 people had been killed. There was, therefore, a great deal of experience of fire-fighting, in particular, and civil defence in general. So why did the air-raids on Belfast in April 1941 prove so devastating, why was the government in Northern Ireland unprepared for the air-raids which became known as the 'Belfast Blitz'? What effects did the Blitz have upon the people of Belfast?

**SOURCE A:** from an official statement by the Ministry of Public Security for Northern Ireland describing the effects of the air-raid on 7/8 April 1941; this was published in the *Irish Times* on 9 April 1941

A heavy barrage of anti-aircraft fire was maintained by ground defences. A number of fires were started, but the majority were extinguished very quickly. The fire services were prompt and resourceful in dealing with these fires. The Civil Defence services displayed a high standard of training and conduct.

The number of casualties was small, but, unfortunately, a few were fatal.

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**SOURCE B:** from a report on BBC radio describing the air-raid on 15-16 April 1941

In some districts of Belfast, shops and houses were damaged and a small number of people were killed.

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**SOURCE C:** from a top secret government report on the effects of the air-raid on 15/16 April 1941

There were big fires in the Crumlin Road, Antrim Road and near York Station.

Number of houses totally destroyed	2,580
Number of houses partly destroyed	3,500
Number of houses slightly damaged	35,000
Total	41,080

**SOURCE D:** from a confidential report compiled by the Northern Ireland government on the air-raid of 15/16 April 1941

- General:** The casualties were heavy, but the damage normal
- Morale:** There was a good deal of panic exodus from the city. The exodus went on night after night. Another factor which contributed to this panic was the shortage of domestic shelters.
- Fatalities:** The laying out and identification of the dead was badly organised. All bodies should have the original label attached to them.
- Ambulances:** Belfast requires another 30-50 ambulances.
- Fire fighting:** The services were good, but completely inadequate for the task that faced them.
- Road Cleaning and Demolition:** The authorities had no immediate plan for the immense task involved. The rescue parties were inadequate.
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**SOURCE E:** numbers of air-raid victims in some cities in the United Kingdom; this table was compiled years later from official figures.

	No of Raids	Killed	Injured	Houses destroyed or damaged
Belfast	4	955	2,436	56,885
Coventry	43	1,252	1,859	54,373
Hull	82	c1,200	c1,800	86,722
Southampton	57	633	1,908	43,289
Portsmouth	67	930	2,837	13,174

**SOURCE F:** number of heavy anti-aircraft guns in some British cities in September 1939; these are taken from official figures.

Liverpool	96
Glasgow	88
Bristol	68
Belfast	16

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**SOURCE G:** a list of casualties compiled by the Northern Ireland Ministry of Public Security Intelligence; this covered the period from 1800 hours 18 April to 1800 hours 21 April 1941

Belfast. The latest figures available at 1700 hours today are:

Dead	500
Admitted to hospital	493
Slightly injured	1024
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>2017</u></b>

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**SOURCE H:** from an interview with Mr McFall, who was 10 years old in 1941. This interview was conducted after the war

People's lives were upturned just overnight and people were petrified with fear; they couldn't really believe what had happened to them. I think that there were a hundred killed that night. There was a lot of damage done on the Shankhill and there was a shelter on the corner of Percy Street and the Shankhill Road – it got a direct hit as far as I remember. I think a hundred were killed in that shelter.

### **Assignment One: Objective 1**

1. Describe the importance of Belfast to the war effort of the UK. **(15)**
2. Why was Belfast not bombed before April 1941? **(15)**
3. In what ways did Belfast appear to suffer more seriously from the effects of bombing than many other cities in Britain? **(20)**

**(Total: 50 marks)**

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## Assignment Two: Objectives 2 and 3

1. Study Source A.

What can you learn from Source A about the air-raid on Belfast on 7/8 April 1941? **(6)**

2. Study Sources A, B, C and D.

Do Sources C and D support the evidence of Sources A and B about the Belfast Blitz? Explain your answer. **(8)**

3. Study Sources D, E and F.

How useful are Sources D, E and F in helping you to explain the effects of the bombing on Belfast? **(10)**

4. Study Sources G and H.

Use the sources and your own knowledge to explain why Belfast suffered so badly from the effects of air-raids in April 1941. **(12)**

5. Study all the sources.

‘It is very difficult for historians to produce a full and accurate reconstruction of what happened in Belfast during the Blitz of April/May 1941.’ **(14)**

Use the sources, and your own knowledge, to explain whether you agree with this view.

**(Total: 50 marks)**

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## Coursework Assignments Mark Scheme

### The Belfast Blitz

#### Assignment One

1. *Describe the importance of Belfast to the war effort of the UK.* (15)

**Target: Key features/recall of knowledge**

**Level 1:** Simple statements offering some reasons for importance, e.g. shipbuilding, the docks, aeroplane factories etc. (1-5)

**Level 2:** Developed statements giving reasons supported by relevant knowledge, e.g. the significance of shipbuilding during the war. (6-10)

**Level 3:** Developed exposition exploring the implications of a range of reasons, e.g. the strategic position of Northern Ireland in controlling the approaches and providing bases in addition to the economic factors. (11-15)

2. *Why was Belfast bombed in April 1941 and not before?* (15)

**Target: Causation/recall of knowledge**

**Level 1:** Simple statements giving reasons supported by some knowledge, e.g. the Germans were concentrating on London, and the mainland, Belfast bombed because of its industry. (1-5)

**Level 2:** Developed statements giving reasons supported by relevant knowledge, e.g. until the Spring of 1941 the main German attacks were on the south-east and the Midlands, as a result of the Battle of Britain and the attempts to break the morale of Britain through the Blitz; attacks on other areas developed during the spring of 1941. (6-10)

**Level 3:** Developed explanation supported by appropriately

selected knowledge showing understanding of the sequence of events in the years from 1940 to 1941 and the links between them, e.g. by 1941 the Germans had given up hope of invading Britain; the Belfast Blitz was part of a wider attack on industry and part of an attempt to win the Battle of the Atlantic.

**(11-15)**

3. *In what ways did Belfast appear to suffer more seriously from the effects of bombing than many other cities in Britain?*

**(20)**

**Target: Causation/analysis of key features /recall of knowledge**

**Level 1:** Simple statements giving reasons supported by some knowledge e.g. the attacks were unexpected and the city was unprepared, it was concentrated and details of raids etc.

**(1-5)**

**Level 2:** Developed statements giving reasons supported by relevant knowledge e.g. the city had escaped earlier attacks, there were insufficient anti aircraft batteries and only one squadron of fighters etc.

**(6-10)**

**Level 3:** Developed explanation supported by appropriately selected knowledge showing understanding of the nature of the attacks upon Belfast, e.g. references to other numbers killed and numbers of houses destroyed in the raids, or to the length of the raids on Belfast an other UK cities etc.

**(11-15)**

**Level 4:** Sustained argument supported by precisely selected knowledge showing clear understanding of the nature and extent of the attacks and of the degree of preparedness of the defences of the city and of the comparative effects of German raids on other British cities, e.g. Coventry, London.

**(16-20)**

**Coursework Assignment Mark Scheme  
The Belfast Blitz**

**Assignment Two**

1. *What can you learn from Source A about the air-raid on Belfast on 7/8 April 1941?* (6)

**Target: Comprehension of and inference from one source**

**Level 1:** Simple statements taken from source at face value, e.g. there were some casualties, the Civil Defence did its job etc. (1-3)

**Level 2:** Developed statements making inferences from the source, e.g. as Level 1 and comments that it gives the impression that the air-raid had relatively little effect upon Belfast. (4-6)

2. *Do Sources C and D support the evidence of Sources A and B about the Belfast Blitz? Explain your answer.* (8)

**Target: Comprehension, comparison and evaluation of sources/recall of knowledge**

**Level 1:** Simple statements using the sources at face value, e.g. A and B say one thing, C and D are different a radio report, Sources A and D are from the government, they give different accounts, etc. (1-3)

**Level 2:** Developed statements making inferences or commenting on the tone of the sources, e.g. A and B are very positive, C and D are secret documents and would therefore not be restricted in what they said. (4-6)

**Level 3:** Developed explanation using the nature and provenance of the sources and supported by appropriately selected knowledge, e.g. the government was very concerned to maintain morale and Source A shows their control of the media. Source C was giving the facts to ministers. (7-8)

3. *How useful are Sources D, E and F in helping you to explain the effects of bombing on Belfast?* (10)

**Target: Analysis and cross referencing of sources for utility**

**Level 1:** Makes simple statements about usefulness based on content or nature of sources, e.g. Source D gives details about how air-raids were dealt with, Source F gives details about the number of AA guns, etc.

**(1-3)**

**Level 2:** Developed statements about usefulness drawing inferences from nature of sources e.g. Source D, a secret report, shows the lack of preparedness of the authorities in Belfast, Source F shows the poor state of the defences and these help explain why casualties in Belfast (Source E) were so high, etc.

**(4-6)**

**Level 3:** Developed analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the sources about the extent of damage to Belfast using nature of the sources, e.g. Source D gives conclusive evidence that the air-raids on Belfast were much more damaging than air-raids elsewhere in the UK and Source D (lack of preparation and resources) and Source F (limited AA guns) help us understand why that was so. N.B. figures in Source F relate not 1939 not 1941.

**(7-10)**

4. *Use the sources and your own knowledge to explain why Belfast suffered so badly from the effects of air-raids in April 1941.*

**(12)**

**Target: Comprehension and synthesis of sources with factual recall.**

**Level 1:** Simple statements using the sources at face value OR some own knowledge e.g. Source G shows how many people were killed etc.

**(1-3)**

**Level 2:** Developed statements making inferences from the sources supported by relevant knowledge e.g. Source H gives the reactions of someone who was there at the time but was remembering later on.

**(4-6)**

- Level 3:** Developed explanation using the sources as evidence and selected own knowledge and reaching straightforward judgement, e.g. the official report gives precise information and is written at the time of the raids upon the people of Belfast, Source G gives clear statistical evidence about casualties (7-10)
- Level 4:** Sustained argument using the sources as evidence and precisely selected own knowledge utility. Examines the weight which can be placed upon the evidence and the insight given into the impact of the raids upon the people of Belfast, e.g. explains how the nature and the content of the sources can be cross-referenced to show the impact and extent of the raids. (11-12)
5. *'It is it difficult for historians to produce a full and accurate reconstruction of what happened in Belfast during the Blitz of April/May 1941.'* Use the sources, and your own knowledge, to explain whether you agree with this view. (14)
- Target:** **Analysis of sources and recall of knowledge to make a judgement about reconstruction of an historical event**
- Level 1:** Simple statements offering points in support using sources or own knowledge, e.g. the sources disagree, it is difficult to know what really happened. (1-3)
- Level 2:** Developed statements offering points in support using sources and supported by relevant knowledge, e.g. specific instances quoted, some sources clearly contradict each other about the effects of certain air-raids/casualties, or about the degree of preparedness of the authorities etc. Knowledge about damage caused by raids. (4-6)
- Level 3:** Developed explanation giving a judgement about difficulty making confident use of sources and supported by appropriately selected knowledge, e.g. there is a clear difference between the sources which

are controlled by the government and those which are not. Uses own knowledge about April 1941 raids to contrast with the sources.

**(7-11)**

**Level 4:** Sustained argument about problems of reconstruction using the sources as evidence and supported by precisely selected knowledge, e.g. there was a deliberate attempt by the government to conceal the true nature of the impact of the air-raids upon the province; this makes reconstruction difficult. Uses own knowledge to support judgement.

**(12-14)**