



AS

History

7041/20 Democracy and Nazism: Germany, 1918-1933

Report on the examination

Version: 1.0
June 2025

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General

Students generally responded well to the demands of the examination and the paper generated a full range of marks. The majority were able to produce a coherent response to both the essay questions and the compulsory source question. In the case of the essay questions, answers whereby students earned lower marks tended to demonstrate a noticeable lack of focus on the chronological range of the given question.

The more successful responses were characterised by an ability to maintain a close focus on both the range and on the key issues raised by the question. These responses also included sufficiently detailed supporting information in support of a consistent argument. The very best responses exhibited an analytical approach throughout the answer. It was also noted that a thematic rather than chronological approach was more successful.

Conversely, less successful responses exhibited a tendency to produce learned responses through which a list of supporting and opposing factors were presented in a half-and-half fashion without significant discernment as to why the information was being utilised in support of the given argument. Such responses often reserved the majority of their judgement for the concluding paragraph, or included a brief summary sentence relating back to the key issue at the end of each paragraph or section of the essay.

In order to access the higher levels of the mark scheme, it is advised that students spend sufficient time planning their response to essay questions in order to produce a coherent response which is led by argument.

Finally, the majority of students managed their time well during the exam. In the few isolated cases where Section A had been tackled after section B there were one or two instances of students running out of time, and therefore losing a significant proportion of marks for Section A.

Section A – Question 1

For the compulsory source question, students were asked to assess the value of two sources in relation to the Nazi Party's rise to power by March 1933. The majority of students provided a summative comparative judgement as is required for this question.

With regard to provenance for Source A, students commonly identified that this was an external perspective and made the point that they would therefore expect the source to be more objective. Some students supported this statement by highlighting the fact the author would be less likely to be subject to Nazi intimidation, or by the fact that a British newspaper would not be subject to censorship. However, whilst this is a valid observation students should be reminded not to confuse reliability with value.

In terms of content, the most common approach was to refer to the processes by which Hitler was appointed Chancellor, particularly the role of backstairs intrigue. The more successful

answers did not become distracted into giving an extensive account of this, but some students did talk about backstairs intrigue at length and therefore lost sight of the focus of the question. Students should be reminded that, for question 1, the emphasis is on the selection of contextual knowledge and how this is used in support of the analysis of the source material. Students should not spend too much time providing exhaustive context.

Source A further provided good opportunity for students to discuss the reaction of the German public to the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor. Some went on to consider the comparative popularity of the Nazi party at the time of Hitler's appointment, and the implications this had in their securing power.

For source B, there tended to be less detailed comment on provenance, although a number of students did make effective comment that the source was derived from a memoir published in 1949. Some commented on the fact Diels was Head of the Political Police and discussed the insight into Nazi policy he would therefore reasonably be expected to have had.

The majority of students were able to successfully place the source in context by providing valid supporting information on the suppression of Communism and wider opposition. Higher-level responses included some specific supporting knowledge about the consequential use of legislation in the Nazi rise to power, typically by referring to the Decree for the Protection of the People and State and/or the Enabling Act.

The most common error with question 1 was to include information from beyond March 1933, which was most generally seen through reference to the ongoing consolidation of power, in particular by including information on the Night of the Long Knives. Students should be reminded to maintain a close focus on the given date range of the question.

Section B – Question 2

This was the more popular of the two essay questions. The question asked students to evaluate whether the invasion of the Ruhr was the most significant challenge faced by the Weimar Republic in the years 1921 to 1924. Most students possessed a range of knowledge in relation to the challenges faced by the Weimar Republic and were able to communicate this well.

The most successful responses were able to link the invasion to the consequential challenges this caused for the republic and evaluate the relative significance of a range of factors. Less successful responses tended to list challenges in isolation, providing a summary sentence or two for each given factor.

When students performed less well, it was often because of a failure to focus on the chronological range of the question. Several responses included irrelevant material, most typically referring to the Spartacist Uprising or the Kapp Putsch.

Section B – Question 3

This question asked students whether they agreed that the German economy had fully recovered in the years 1924 to 1928. In general, the knowledge and understanding displayed in response to this question was sufficient.

Some students were able to provide supporting contextual information in support of the fact the economy had recovered by referring to the impact of the Dawes Plan, and a significant proportion included some useful supporting information on working and living standards, and the role of the welfare state.

The most typical challenging factors discussed were the fact the middle classes had not recovered from the effects of hyperinflation, and that significant weaknesses persisted in the agricultural sector. A number of responses included information on foreign affairs, which was relevant if linked to the economy, but on occasion such links were absent.

Less effective answers often spent too long contextualising the answer by providing unnecessary detail on the work of Stresemann. A small number of students did not comment beyond 1924, focusing solely on the issue of hyperinflation and therefore did not fully understand the requirements of the question.

At the other end of the chronological range, some students lost focus and went on to discuss the Great Depression at length. Although it was deemed valid that the impact of the later Great Depression indicated the economy had not recovered by 1928, it is important to remind students not to include extended analysis of events from outside the chronological range of the question.

Less secure responses were also often exemplified by tendency to produce a generic description of the 'Golden Years' which sometimes lacked effective links to the economy. The highest achieving students demonstrated a sustained focus on economic issues, again illustrating the importance of maintaining focus on the key issue in question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.