



A-Level History

7042/2K International Relations and Global Conflict,
c1890-1941

Report on the examination

Version: 1.0
June 2025

Further copies of this report are available from [aqa.org.uk](https://www.aqa.org.uk)

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres 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 centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

General Overview

The majority of students demonstrated a strong level of preparation for this examination, reflecting thorough revision and engagement with the course material. Time management was generally good, with most students completing three questions. Many adopted a strategic approach, choosing to answer questions in the order of greatest confidence, such as beginning with essay responses. This method is entirely valid; however, it remains important that answers are clearly labelled, and that sufficient space is left between responses to aid the marking process.

A small number of students had ineffective written communication, including issues with grammar, legibility and the extensive use of asterisks for additions or uncrossed-out rough work. These factors made the assessment of extended responses more challenging.

A notable proportion of students had clearly engaged with wider academic reading, which was often used effectively to enhance their arguments. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that while references to historians' interpretations can add value, they should not replace factual historical content. Engagement with historiography can deepen understanding, but it is not essential for achieving the highest marks. The primary focus of assessment remains on the student's own analysis and evaluation of historical events and evidence.

Question 01

With this question, students were required to evaluate the value of three separate sources in relation to the July Crisis in 1914. They were not asked to compare the given sources and those who did wasted valuable time, although they were not penalised for so doing. The answer did not require an introduction or an overall conclusion, but some concluding judgement on each source in relation to the question posed was helpful to meet the criteria for the highest marks. The best answers were a nuanced evaluation of both provenance and content of the sources. Formulaic, rote-learned approaches were often less effective. A significant number of students were able to identify features about provenance but then were not able to evaluate this beyond a simple comment such as 'they were there at the time and so this source is accurate'. This approach often leads to much speculation around provenance (for example assuming that the Manchester Guardian gave the views of Britain as a whole or that diary entries must be truthful) which is not then borne out by the content of the source. The best answers were able to combine the two. Simply identifying provenance and making a vague assertion about tone does not lead to higher marks.

There were a persistent minority making very few references to 'value' at all and conflating this with validity, utility, reliability and accuracy, which are not the same thing. There were still a number of students paraphrasing the sources and offering very little if any contextual information to support the points they were trying to make.

Source A: Many responses included generalised comments about the nature of diaries, such as their perceived honesty or privacy, without deeper critical engagement. However, content analysis for this source was generally strong, with widespread understanding of the 'Blank Cheque' and Germany's support for Austria-Hungary.

Source B: There was better handling of the provenance here, though a number of students misidentified the sender, attributing the message to Nicholas. This misreading significantly altered the interpretation of the source. Stronger responses accurately identified Wilhelm's role and linked the content and provenance to the broader context of the July Crisis, offering limitations where appropriate.

Source C: Many students relied on generic observations about newspapers without adequately situating the source within the context of the July Crisis. Additionally, some responses extended beyond the scope of the question, discussing the broader causes of the First World War. The most effective answers focused specifically on the July Crisis and the aftermath, including the mobilisation of various nations in Europe as well as showing an understanding of the Alliance systems.

Question 02

This question required an analysis of the causes of the Bosnian Crisis in 1908/9. Stronger responses demonstrated depth of knowledge, addressing the roles of Austria-Hungary, Russia, Serbia and the decline of the Ottoman Empire. Less successful responses often lacked sufficient detail or presented a basic chronological narrative. A few students also diverged from the question by focusing on the consequences of the Ottoman Empire's collapse rather than its causal role in the crisis. A number of students also gave evidence from way beyond the relevant date range. Some students omitted balance from their answer completely and only focussed on the role of Russia in causing the crisis, therefore limiting their answer.

Question 03

This question assessed understanding of the 'Spirit of Locarno' during the interwar period. It was essential to adhere to the specified date range, yet several responses included events such as the Corfu or the Aaland Islands Incidents, which fell outside the timeframe and thus weakened the analysis of the specific question. Stronger responses presented well-supported arguments, recognising both the efforts to uphold the spirit of Locarno and the challenges posed by national self-interest. Many also correctly identified the impact of the Wall Street Crash and the Great Depression as key factors that undermined international cooperation. Some responses lacked depth due to the absence of specific examples of international agreements or conferences.

Question 04

This was the most frequently chosen essay question and produced a number of high-quality responses. The most successful answers were analytical, moving beyond a simple chronological account of Hitler's actions. Most students were able to identify how Hitler's foreign policy challenged the Treaty of Versailles and many also explored other aims such as anti-communism (e.g., involvement in the Spanish Civil War or the Anti-Comintern Pact), the pursuit of Lebensraum and the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact in 1939, and made judgements based on the evidence given. Less successful responses tended to be more descriptive and lacked the depth required for higher-level analysis and substantiated judgements.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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