

HISTORY: WORLD AFFAIRS 1917-1991

Paper 2158/01

Paper 1

General comments

The work of candidates in this examination was generally balanced between all the sections of the paper, though **Section E** remains less popular, as do some particular topics within other sections. There were too few attempts at **Questions 6, 10, 11, 15, 16, 19, 20, 25, 30, 31** to make general comment appropriate.

It was encouraging to find a distinct number of well written scripts, with purposeful focus on the requirements of questions and supported by accurate and broadly based historical references. Those candidates who were disappointed by their result could have improved the outcome with more secure and appropriately applied knowledge.

The most effective responses demonstrate secure knowledge. It must also be broadly based. Thus, names, events, movements, policies, governments should be firmly known and understood, while connections between such relevant data should also be held in mind. Some candidates diminish the value of their work by loose, vague and inaccurate knowledge which it is not possible to reward with good marks.

Knowledge must also be appropriately used. In order to improve some candidates need to concentrate on producing answers which are relevant, and which remain focused on what is asked. Thus, in the last part of each question, the angle of approach (e.g. 'why', 'how', 'to what extent', 'how far', 'explain', 'in what respects') should be carefully noted by the candidate and historical material that is appropriate to that focus should be used. Another feature of effective responses is that they observe the time frame given in the question. Answers which include excessive material outside the period in question are likely to lose marks and this is evident even in popular areas of the syllabus. Often candidates seem keen to demonstrate all they know on a topic rather than selecting material which is relevant to the particular question. This was particularly noticeable with the time frame of 1936–39 in **Question 2**, the 1960s in **Question 4**, 1929–34 in **Question 7**, 1945–54 in **Question 14** and 1917 (alone) in **Question 17**. While a little introductory material may be appropriate and can be used to good effect, this should form only a small portion of the total answer. With 14 marks available for the first part of each question, trespassing outside the given dates can result in much wasted effort and lost marks. Some well prepared and knowledgeable candidates lost valuable time providing general surveys and then found themselves struggling to complete the paper.

Question 1

There were many successful and well informed attempts at this question, possibly the most popular in the paper. Many candidates, whose knowledge was accurate and broadly based, were able to secure the full 14 marks for the first part. Those who produced the highest level responses viewed the terms of the treaty broadly, concerning themselves with territorial, military, political and colonial aspects and focusing throughout on the 'treatment' specifically indicated in the question. While Wilson, Lloyd George and Clemenceau might be mentioned in introductory remarks, some candidates over-played their role for the requirements of this question and lost focus on the key issue. Similarly some candidates went on to look at long-term effects of the treaty, not specifically required in the question's wording. The second part also secured effective reasoning on Germany's complaints, often looking usefully at how justified these complaints were.



Question 2

There were some highly effective responses to this question which showed an excellent grasp of the relevant content and a clear understanding of the terms of the question. In order to improve some candidates needed to take better note of the dates 1936–39. Some responses spent too long relating pre-1936 material and a small minority went on into the war itself. A few candidates treated this first part as an opportunity to present a prepared answer on the origins of the Second World War, rather than to see that the requirement was a description of events that led to war within a particular framework. Many responses to the last part alluded to appeasement, with useful discussion of a theme advanced earlier, and other military and diplomatic reasons that favoured the German position. A relatively small number included comment on blitzkrieg techniques.

Question 3

Candidates demonstrated particularly sound knowledge in parts **(c)** and **(d)** in this popular question on Vietnam. Some candidates were less confident in handling parts **(a)** and **(b)**. Answers to the last part were generally well rounded, considering events in both the USA and elsewhere, as well as within Vietnam itself. Accurate supporting detail was used to good effect and distinguished the most successful responses.

Question 4

There were some good answers to this question although many candidates would have improved their marks if they had not confused the period. A large number wrote in great detail about the origins of the Cold War in the mid-1940s and its development later in that decade with very little reference to the 1960s which should have been the focus of their response. Of those who did write about the 1960s, Cuba was usually given reasonable attention and a few included the U2 incident in 1960 and the general problems surrounding the status of Berlin the early 1960s. Such responses gained credit and higher marks were awarded if responses also dealt with the SALT talks of the late 1960s. Those candidates who had demonstrated a reasonable grasp of the 1960s coped the best with the second part of the question, although many could have improved their responses with the inclusion of more secure knowledge.

Question 5

It was evident that this question covered familiar ground and candidates were able to support their responses with relevant detail. Most candidates wrote confidently on part **(a)**, although some might have taken a more balanced approach when discussing 'structure' and 'membership'. For example, the specialised agencies received a great deal of attention, sometimes to the neglect of the major organs of the UNO. Some responses would have benefited from greater attention to the 'membership' aspect as it was occasionally not so well developed as that for 'structure'. Answers to **(b)** were most successful when they made a clear attempt to discuss use of UN forces. Discussion of the specialised agencies was not a substitute. Those who were able to provide accurate, specific examples to support their answers gained the most credit. The last part of the question did require a contrast between the two organisations and most candidates detected this and wrote with some degree of authority. Some candidates pointed out merits of the League of Nations (e.g. the specialised agencies) which were also to be found in the UNO. This was a creditworthy approach so long as comments were then related to the extent to which the UN was/was not an improvement on the League.

Question 7

The best responses addressed the precise time frame of the question, supported their ideas with relevant detail of events, such as the elections and Enabling Act, and made a good attempt at the final part, considering a range of factors in their explanation. In a number of instances answers began with the creation of the Weimar Republic and went through the economic crisis of 1923 (sometimes confused with 1929) before getting to the essential years of the question. There was also a slight tendency to proceed into later developments in the Third Reich, rather than stop in 1934 as required by the question. Some candidates could have improved their responses by dealing with the whole period stated, rather than restricting themselves to a discussion of 1933–1934. The last part of the question presented few problems and almost all candidates were able to tackle this with a degree of confidence.



Question 8

Of the first three sections in this question parts **(b)** and **(c)** were done particularly well. Many candidates displayed clear knowledge of the corporate state and defined it effectively. Others interpreted it as a synonym for Italy under Mussolini and gained less credit as a result. While **(b)** was better recognised, some responses failed to develop fully the 'pacts' of which the Lateran Treaty was a part. Part **(c)** was perhaps the best attempted of the three, with many looking back to Italy's defeat at Adowa and forward to its problems with the League and other powers. Answers to the last part were usually well balanced between social and economic advantage and totalitarian repression. Providing clear links between the elements of the response and supporting ideas with precise detail helps candidates to gain more marks.

Question 9

Questions on Spain in the inter-war years have become more popular in recent examinations and candidates are gaining a better understanding of the relevant content. Some responses would have been improved by inclusion of greater detail of both events in the early 1930s and, more significantly, on the Civil War itself. There was some strength to be found throughout in the understanding of the basis of Republican and Nationalist support and this was used to advantage by some candidates in the last part of the question.

Question 12

Many responses had considerable merit in the first three sections, but were less confident in the last part of the question. Part **(a)** was often addressed in detail, with appropriate focus on the immediate events leading to US entry into the First World War and to the practical support that this represented to the Entente powers. In part **(b)** some candidates were able to produce all fourteen points with accuracy, while others made an excellent attempt. It is perhaps most advisable for candidates to group the points and comment on them in this way rather than attempt a full list (although either approach would be credited). Answers to **(c)** were sometimes less well developed, but many did make the point that Wilson was an idealist, threatened in both Paris and in the USA. Some candidates continued this theme in the last part, explaining how Wilson was unable to handle domestic opposition with adequate skill. As always the most effective candidates were able to provide relevant detail to support their points and did not have recourse to vague generalisations.

Question 13

There were few problems of time frame in part **(a)**. A brief look back into the euphoria of the 1920s that contained the seeds of the later Depression was appropriately handled by most candidates. Attention was given to social, economic and political circumstances in the early 1930s and there were many well balanced responses. It was anticipated that most attention would be given to the early stages of the New Deal in **(b)** and while scope was often good in this part, the degree of detail and linkage to resolving the problems of the Depression could have been improved in some cases. The best responses not only listed items of legislation with accuracy but went on to show how they helped to address the situation. The majority of candidates were able to explain reasons why FDR attracted criticism by 1936, although some might have achieved a better balance between those who thought the New Deal did not go far enough (such as Huey Long) and those who thought it had gone too far (such as the Supreme Court).

Question 14

The wording of this question specifically requested candidates to consider the situation 'within' the USA. A significant minority of candidates chose to interpret it as a general question on the spread of communism in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Many responses addressed issues concerning persons such as Hiss, Rosenberg and McCarthy, who in their different ways fanned the fear of communism within the USA. A focus on issues internal to the US was needed in the first part and some candidates overlooked this. They were then at a loss in developing the last part, having used their material on the Soviet Union already.

Question 17

The most successful responses to this question maintained a clear focus on the year 1917. Candidates clearly had extensive knowledge of the topic but some lost marks by including excessive background, dealing with 1905, the early stages of the First World War and Rasputin, when a modest introduction on tsarist autocracy would have sufficed. There were many detailed responses which dealt with February, October and events associated with the Provisional Government. Some restricted their answers to the two revolutions, achieving only partial coverage of the question as a result. Those candidates who recognised

that the final part of the question required military, economic and political references in order to produce a rounded explanation of why the Bolshevik government held onto power were most highly rewarded.

Question 18

The first three sections of this question presented few difficulties for most candidates, although many responses could have been better supported with specific detail. Thus, in part **(a)**, while comment on achievement was included in most answers, the best candidates demonstrated an understanding of the concept and nature of the planned economy and the impact that this had on industry. In part **(b)**, discussion of collectivisation was well informed and many candidates considered both its advantages and disadvantages for the Soviet population. The purges, in part **(c)**, were competently addressed. In the last part of the question, most candidates quite correctly concluded that propaganda and force were of considerable importance. Some candidates developed their answers further and alluded to the stability and the social advance that was also a feature of Stalinist Russia.

Question 21

In the first part of this question domestic policies were often considered with excellent scrutiny and precise historical references. There was less confident writing on foreign policy from some candidates and a few chose to overlook this aspect altogether. The majority of candidates made a useful attempt at the last part of the question, considering both the failure of much of what Gorbachev sought to achieve, as well as the political and military moves against him.

Question 22

The best candidates were able to separate events connected to the creation of the mandate in 1920 from the creation of Israel in 1948. Such confusion was evident in weaker responses and many answers demonstrated a clear need for more secure knowledge on the earlier history of the Middle East.

Question 23

Most candidates who chose to tackle this question demonstrated clear knowledge of the events mentioned in the question and were able to support their answers with precise detail in parts **(a)** and **(b)**. Many were able to discuss a range of reasons for remaining tension in Arab-Israeli relations during the 1980s.

Question 24

The wording of this question provided a clear time frame and also a specific location (Zimbabwe) and discussion of the protracted decolonisation of this part of Africa was anticipated in both parts. The majority of candidates would have achieved more marks if they had focused on the 1950s and 1960s, rather than writing about the early period of colonisation, with reference to Rhodes in particular, and the consequent sense of injustice to the indigenous peoples. These candidates were clearly writing about a topic which they preferred but could gain only limited credit for their responses.

Question 26

Those who attempted this quite precise question on South Africa recognised each of the four items in parts **(a)–(d)** and were generally able to support their comments with detailed references. Many wrote purposefully, including a range of issues in their answers, on why it was no longer possible to maintain apartheid in the 1980s.

Question 27

This question permitted wide scope over a long period and most candidates paid appropriate attention to the relevant features within the time frame. The most successful responses included detailed development of this 'main features' question and displayed impressive knowledge. There was a tendency among less successful candidates to present rather thin material and to neglect the way in which Japan was involved in Chinese affairs in these years. Most were able to make a viable attempt at the last part, usually by drawing on Mao's long record of attracting support in China. The immediate impact of his triumph in the Civil War was another area which a few candidates developed to good effect.

Question 28

There were some encouraging responses where candidates were able to discuss the full time period and produce detailed accounts of Japanese history after the initial restablisation of the post-war period. Some candidates concentrated on the earlier period and its significance for the rebirth of Japan and while this gained credit, full coverage of the period might have achieved higher reward. The last part was also purposefully undertaken and there were some impressive responses which demonstrated very detailed knowledge and understanding.

Question 29

Parts **(a)** and **(b)** were usually well attempted, with accurate and relevant references. Some answers to part **(c)** needed to extend their focus across the whole period and consider the early moves at improved relations between China and the USA. The last part of the question was handled in an equally competent manner and many responses contained pertinent and well-informed observations on the commitment of the Chinese government to communism in the 1980s.

