

HISTORY

Paper 9489/11
Document Question

Key messages

- The most effective responses to **part (a)** questions are closely focused on the terms of the question.
- In **part (a)** the purpose of evaluating the sources is to explain the similarities or differences between the sources. Commentaries on the context or discussions on reliability are not relevant unless they are used in this way.
- In **part (b)** the purpose of evaluating the sources is to decide which side of the argument (support or challenge) is stronger. Sources should be placed in context and evaluated to decide whether they lend weight to the argument. In common with **(a)**, commentaries on the context or reliability of sources are not creditworthy unless they serve the question.
- It is important to use source content to support points made in both sections of the question paper. Short quotations are adequate.

General comments

Most responses showed positive characteristics and demonstrated understanding that the **(a)** question requires identification of similarities **and** differences, and that **part (b)** requires an explanation of how each source either supports or challenges the statement or prompt in the question. Candidates understood the need to use the source content to support their answer and provided quotations or direct paraphrases from relevant sources to support their points.

The focus of the **(a)** questions is to identify valid similarities and differences between the content of the sources. In each of the **(a)** questions candidates were required to make comparisons of inferences based on 'events' in **Question 1(a)**, 'attitudes' in **Question 2(a)** and 'responses' in **Question 3(a)**. Where answers were weak it often resulted from overlooking these specific terms with some writing detailed comparisons of the sources which were not focused on the terms of the question. It is important that like-for-like comparisons are made. Some weaker responses asserted similarities or differences for points which were not comparable. If the comparisons cannot be properly supported, they cannot be credited. In some cases, the similarity or difference was asserted with no support offered from either source.

To achieve marks in the higher levels, it is necessary to evaluate the sources by considering the context in which they were produced. However, to be creditworthy the evaluation of the sources must relate to the question asked. In **part (a)** candidates need to decide how the sources are similar or different and to consider why these similarities or differences exist. For instance in **Question 1(a)** it was possible to use contextual knowledge of the revolution in Berlin to explain why Frederick William had a different view of events in March 1848 compared with the account written a month later in Source B. In **Question 3(b)**, effective responses understood that evaluative comments must be linked to the question. It is useful for candidates to ask themselves whether their knowledge of the topic supports the claims made in the sources. If so, then that might increase the value of a source. Alternatively, they might consider if a source was written for a specific purpose or audience, how that affects its weight as evidence. For example some used their knowledge of Hitler's foreign policy to assess whether what was argued in Source D was a valid assessment of the situation in the Rhineland. The weight of the evidence was then considered to decide if the source weakened or strengthened the support or challenge element of the answer.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: European Option: Liberalism and nationalism in Germany, 1815–71

Question 1

- (a) **Read Sources A and B. How far do these sources agree about events in Berlin in March 1848?**

Most responses succeeded in making relevant comparisons between the sources, with one of the most frequently discussed similarities being that it was clear from both sources that Frederick William IV held outsiders responsible for events in Berlin. The majority supported this point with source details. It was argued that ‘a band of villains, mostly strangers’ as stated in Source A, matched the point in Source B that ‘the most disreputable scoundrels had flooded into the city’ from outside. Equally valid was the point that both sources suggest that the troops were attacked before they fired. The straightforward point of matching the detail that the revolutionaries built barricades was often missed. Identifying valid differences proved to be challenging for some but many responses recognised that while the King described the action of the Berliners as an ‘unhappy error’ in Source A, he suggested they were complicit in the conspiracy in Source B. Weaker responses resulted from overlooking the requirement to focus on events, often discussing Frederick William’s tone instead. A few candidates used their contextual knowledge to account for the similarities or differences between the sources. However, a considerable number lost valuable time including background knowledge, or a commentary on the reliability of the sources, which was not linked to the question.

- (b) **‘Frederick William IV supported the ideas of the revolutionaries.’ How far do the sources support this view?**

Most candidates gave a two-sided response to the question and there was evidence of effective source use in many responses. Most identified Source C as a support source, claiming that the cartoon showed Frederick William IV supported revolutionary ideas because he wanted ‘to lead the movement.’ Some used this source as a challenge to good effect. Such responses argued the source showed the King as an opportunist, running to catch up with the revolutionaries to gain popular support rather than being genuinely interested in revolutionary ideas. Source B was almost universally seen as a challenge argument, Frederick William’s comment that ‘liberalism is a disease’ giving clear evidence that he did not support revolutionary ideas. Some candidates found Source A more difficult to assess. A number argued that it showed no support for revolutionary ideas as the King wanted Berliners to go home and ‘forget what has happened’. More astute responses used their understanding of the context to explain the comment about the ‘great future which will dawn for Prussia’ as support for nationalism which was a key revolutionary idea. Source D was used well. Overall the source was a challenge as Frederick William ultimately ‘listened to more conservative voices’ and abandoned his support for revolutionary ideas. However, many noted there was also a support element in the source as the King spoke with the people about ‘constitutional principles’ which was a demand made by the revolutionaries. Some perceptive answers pointed out that the process shown in Source D mirrored the change in tone and attitude which was seen in Sources A and B. Most attempts to evaluate were generic, often stating that the source was biased or unreliable because it was from a speech or letter without any links to the context or the question. For instance, Source D was often dismissed as unreliable because the author was in favour of democracy, a liberal idea favoured by the revolutionaries. However, the account in Source D was supported by Sources A and B and could be verified by reference to contextual knowledge.

Section B: American Option: The origins of the Civil War, 1820–1861

Question 2

- (a) **Read Sources B and C. Compare and contrast the attitudes of Northern Whigs towards the Fugitive Slave Law.**

Many responses identified a difference by explaining that Source B showed a positive attitude to the Fugitive Slave Law whereas the attitude in Source C was negative. This was usually supported by evidence from Source B where the author could not understand why anyone wanted to change the law, whereas Source C saw the law as unnecessary, too harsh and wanted it modified. Finding

similarities proved challenging for some candidates, although a considerable number noticed that both sources argued against breaking the Fugitive Slave Law. It was also noted that both sources suggested that some of the Northern Whigs were unhappy with the new law. A significant proportion of responses identified similarities or differences but did not provide relevant material from both sources to support their comparison. Some candidates attempted to use their contextual knowledge of the strength of abolitionism in Boston to explain the difference between the sources. The similarity could also be explained with reference to the tension which had surrounded the 1850 Compromise as neither source wanted to encourage law breaking or sectional division. Several responses contained good knowledge of the background to the 1850 Compromise but used this as an introduction to their answer without linking it to the points being made in the sources. Weaker answers were often characterised by misreading Source B as being negative towards the Fugitive Slave Law. Some would have been improved by making like-for-like comparisons or looking beyond the provenance for similarities or differences.

(b) 'The passing of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850 solved the Fugitive Slave issue.' How far do the sources support this view?

Many responses made effective use of the sources and produced a balanced answer which considered arguments for and against the prompt. Source A was used for support as it claimed that the 'law will be upheld by all good citizens.' However, the source also contained an element of challenge, albeit not the main argument of the source. The 'commotion' caused by the arrest of the former slave being evidence that the Fugitive Slave Law would not solve the issue but simply create more tension. Source B was used as a supporting source with its reference to the law already existing in practice for 50 years as evidence that the law was working and would solve the issue. Likewise, Source D suggested the law would work as it had 'produced no evils.' Source C was correctly seen as a challenge source by most candidates. The unhappiness of the Whigs in Boston and their desire to change the law suggested it was flawed and would not work. Weaker responses often resulted from misreading Source C as a supporting source and this led some to produce one-sided answers. Others lost focus on the question, often part way through the response, by discussing whether the sources supported the Fugitive Slave Law. In a small number of responses candidates overlooked the terms of the question and tried to focus on whether the law would solve the issue of slavery. While some candidates attempted to consider the authorship of the sources and comment on their reliability, this often fell short of the mark, either with the use of stock evaluation or comments on reliability not being used to address the question. Some responses tried to use their understanding of the context to argue that as Civil War broke out later the Fugitive Slave Law had failed to solve the fugitive slave issue. However, this is an anachronistic approach and not valid. A more effective approach was to put the sources into the context of the sectional tension which surrounded the development of the 1850 Compromise.

Section C: International Option: The League of Nations and international relations in the 1930s

Question 3

(a) Read Sources A and C. Compare and contrast these sources as evidence about the French and British responses to the Rhineland crisis.

Candidates were asked to compare the responses of Britain and France towards Hitler's remilitarisation of the Rhineland. Most answers supported a valid similarity that both countries expressed 'disapproval' of what Hitler had done. A significant proportion of candidates also identified and supported a difference between the sources by arguing that France was frightened or angry, while Britain seemed more calm and less hostile towards Germany's actions. These points were often supported with well-chosen details from the sources. Many responses included contextual knowledge or comments on the reliability of the sources. The most effective answers used their contextual knowledge to good effect by explaining the reasons behind the similarities or differences. Details of the Versailles settlement, or France's fear of Germany, was used to explain why France reacted more strongly than Britain to Hitler's actions. Others used their knowledge of Britain's attitude towards the peace settlement, or of the policy of appeasement, to explain why Britain responded as it did. The best responses understood that the difference in the relationships between the two countries and Germany accounted for the more even-handed approach in Source C. There were few weak responses. Those seen sometimes asserted similarities and differences and would have been improved with evidence from both sources used to support the comparison.

(b) 'The remilitarisation of the Rhineland revealed Germany's aggressive intentions.' How far do the sources support this view?

There were many effective responses to this question which made good use of the sources to support and challenge the prompt. The best properly related their evaluation of the sources to the question. Source A was used to support the prompt, quoting points such as 'there can be no more peace in Europe' as evidence of the French seeing the remilitarisation of the Rhineland as aggressive. Source B was also used to support with many candidates commenting that the tanks and planes in the cartoon were a clear sign of aggression. The most perceptive responses understood how Hitler was portrayed in the cartoon as appearing to want peace but having thinly veiled aggressive motives. Source C generated some perceptive responses from candidates who understood that although the British 'disapproved' of Hitler's action, they did not think he was as bad as Mussolini because the Rhineland was within Germany's borders. Most understood that Britain was keen to smooth over the issue and avoid antagonising Hitler. Source D was used to challenge the prompt and many quoted the point made that the invasion had a 'purely defensive character'. Although source use was often detailed and showed careful reading, evaluation was often more generalised. For instance many included stock evaluation of Source D, arguing along the lines that the source was unreliable because the author was on trial for war crimes and therefore was likely to be lying. A more effective approach to deciding if the source offered convincing evidence was to consider whether the claims made were supported by contextual knowledge. In some ways the source was valid. It could be argued that in 1936 Hitler did not want war and had ordered those invading the Rhineland to turn back if challenged. On the other hand, Hitler had walked out of the disarmament conference, secretly started rearming and introduced conscription. This knowledge could challenge the claims in Source D. Either argument was acceptable if properly supported and linked to the question. There were few weak responses and those seen sometimes resulted from misreading Source B or a lack of clear links being made to the question.

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Key messages

- This assessment focusses on source comprehension, analysis, and evaluation. As such, this should be central to candidates' approach.
- When reading sources candidates should ensure that they take notice of the overall message of the source to understand the argument or point of view of the author. This means that the source should be viewed holistically rather than divided into individual sentences or part sentences which, taken alone, can convey different ideas to that of the whole source.
- Candidates should ensure that they look closely at the provenance of each source as they read and consider how far this is useful when analysing the statement given. Candidates should consider the nature (what type of source it is), the origin (who wrote or produced the source), and purpose of sources before commenting on generic reliability or placing in a particular context. However, comments about source evaluation should always be related to answering the question posed.
- Time-keeping is vitally important. Candidates need to make sure they leave enough time to complete answers to both questions.

In summary, the key message is for candidates to read the sources very carefully, making sure that they understand both the details of the source and its overall argument. This will mean candidates are better prepared to tackle both questions.

General comments

Most candidates know that the **(a)** question requires an identification of similarities **and** differences, and that answers to **(b)** questions require an explanation of how each source either supports or challenges the prompt in the question.

Stronger responses supported the points made with precise quotations or direct paraphrases from the relevant sources. In some weaker responses candidates attempted to include long sections of quotation by starting a sentence and then using ellipses to join with a later section. This was rarely a successful way of showing support from the source and often led to confusion or lack of clarity. Support should take the form of brief, precise quotation, or paraphrase.

Weaker responses to **part (a)** were often rushed and in a significant minority of cases this was a result of the **part (a)** question being completed last. Although there is no required order for the question to be answered it should be noted that the **part (a)** question is designed to prepare candidates for the longer essay style question by concentrating on two sources and a particular issue. Candidates who completed **part (b)** first often found it difficult to refocus on **part (a)**.

Candidates sometimes made inappropriate points of comparison. They claimed similarities for points which were not actually similar and differences for points which were not different. If the comparisons cannot be properly validated, they cannot be credited. The comparisons should also be focused on the question, e.g. in **Section C** comparisons should focus on 'evidence of foreign intervention in Spain' rather than other similarities and differences between the sources.

The focus of the **(a)** question is to identify valid similarities and differences of the content of the sources. Weaker responses often included large sections of contextual knowledge or stock paragraphs of 'evaluation' rather than tackling the focus of the question. Although there are marks in the top level for commenting on the usefulness of the sources, the focus of the answer should be on making a developed comparison, i.e. identifying similarities and differences.

When analysing the sources many candidates confused themselves by picking out sections of text which ran counter to the overall message of the source. Some candidates were prone to just looking for similar words without thinking about their context. Thus, candidates should be careful to look at the whole source not dissected sections of it when making links to the questions and further judgements.

To achieve higher evaluation marks, it is necessary to explain why the nature, origin or purpose of the source makes it more or less useful when answering the question. One example of where this could be achieved was in **Section B, Source C**. Responses that dealt with this source successfully used their knowledge of the context to comment on the position of O’Sullivan within ongoing discussions around the settling of the West and Manifest Destiny. As such, when using these ideas, it is important that candidates explain why this makes the source more or less useful for the question rather than just stating the date or type of source and saying it is unreliable.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: European Option: Liberalism and Nationalism in Germany 1815–71

Question 1

(a) How far do these sources agree about Frederick William’s refusal of the German crown?

This question focused on the refusal of the German crown by Frederick William rather than on the wider context of the 1848–49 revolutions. Therefore, responses needed to focus on reasons for, and the impact of, Frederick William refusing the crown. Candidates made good attempts at this question and were often able to identify similarities and differences in the sources. In stronger responses this was accompanied by clear contextual knowledge that was used to clarify or further explain the areas of comparison and contrast. The best responses began to use the nature and purpose of both sources in order to explain why the explanations of his refusal showed similarities and differences.

(b) ‘The Frankfurt parliament was to blame for the failure of the 1848–49 revolutions.’ How far do the sources support this assertion?

This question was generally well attempted, and responses showed an ability to use the sources to support and challenge the assertion given in the question. Many responses also recognised the complexity in some of the sources which meant they could both support and challenge the statement. This demonstrated that many candidates were reading sources closely. Most candidates were able to recognise both support and challenge in the sources and good responses used clear quotations or paraphrases to support their points. The better responses were then able to use their knowledge to contextualise the sources to explain them further and answer the question given. This was done best when specific sections of the sources were chosen and then explained or analysed further. There were also a significant minority of responses which started to use the provenance of the sources to weigh up the evidence they gave. This meant that answers began to evaluate sources for use in the question. This was pleasing to see and relied on the knowledge and understanding of candidates. There was still some evidence of candidates using time to write long sections of contextual knowledge or rote provenance discussions. Neither of these were successful as they did not address the specific nature of the question and were therefore often not credit worthy beyond Level 1 in the mark scheme.

Section B: the American Option: The origins of the Civil War, 1820–61

Question 2

(a) Compare and contrast the views of New York regarding the annexation of Texas.

This question provided source extracts from two New York sources which had contrasting views about what would happen as the result of the annexation of Texas. Most responses dealt with this well, but some were confused by Source B which had a more positive view of the annexation. Although this view was not necessarily ‘typical’ of the northern state of New York candidates should be encouraged to read the source carefully rather than assuming that they know what the content will be from the attribution. Better responses recognised the complexity of feeling in New York (as a port city) and dealt with the sources much more accurately. However, most responses were able to

recognise both similarities and differences between the sources and so gave good responses to the question.

(b) How far do the sources agree that the annexation of Texas would benefit the United States?

This question was well attempted by most candidates and there were many responses which were able to show how the sources both supported and challenged the assertion in the question. Better answers also showed a clear grasp of relevant contextual knowledge which helped them expand on and analyse the sources. This meant that they were beginning to read the sources beyond face value. Most answers did not manage to evaluate the sources in context in order to come to a conclusion about utility. Candidates should concentrate on making clear comments about how the nature, origin or purpose impacts on the utility of the source for answering the question rather than describing stock evaluation.

Section C: International Option: The League of Nations and international relations in the 1930s

Question 3

(a) Compare and contrast these sources as evidence about foreign intervention in Spain.

This question required candidates to focus on evidence about foreign intervention in Spain in both source extracts. Some candidates confused this with trying to look at wider issues of appeasement and it should be remembered that **part (a)** questions have a specific focus which should be addressed in the answers. Most candidates were able to recognise both similarities and differences in the sources as detailed in the mark scheme. Better responses were able to use their knowledge of the period to contextualise these sources and clarify or explain the positions taken in them. Some candidates got distracted from the content of the sources by their own knowledge of the events surrounding the Spanish Civil War and this often led to extended sections of own knowledge which did not address the question asked. The best responses used their knowledge of the period to explain the differences between them using provenance which went beyond rote evaluation. Overall, this question was well attempted.

(b) 'There was a genuine commitment to enforcing non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War.' How far do the sources support this view?

This question required some consideration of the meaning of 'genuine commitment' within the context of the period. This relied on candidates using appropriate knowledge to contextualise the sources and test them against the assertion in the question. Many candidates were able to use all four sources to support and challenge the assertion in the question. Most of these used evidence from the sources to clearly support their argument. Better answers used clear and precise contextual knowledge to clarify the evidence from the sources and further explain some of the details. The best answers used their knowledge of the period to evaluate the sources and explain how this evaluation made them more or less useful when answering the question. It was pleasing to see more responses attempt to use this method of evaluation rather than making stock phrases on the origin of sources. Overall, candidates displayed good knowledge in this question and were increasingly adept at working with the sources.

HISTORY

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Document Question

Key messages

- This assessment focusses on source comprehension, analysis, and evaluation. As such, this should be central to candidates' approach.
- When reading sources candidates should ensure that they take notice of the overall message of the source to understand the argument or point of view of the author. This means that the source should be viewed holistically rather than divided into individual sentences or part sentences which, taken alone, can convey different ideas to that of the whole source.
- Candidates should ensure that they look closely at the provenance of each source as they read and consider how far this is useful when analysing the statement given. Candidates should consider the nature (what type of source it is), the origin (who wrote or produced the source), and purpose of sources before commenting on generic reliability or placing in a particular context. However, comments about source evaluation should always be related to answering the question posed.
- Time-keeping is vitally important. Candidates need to make sure they leave enough time to complete answers to both questions.

In summary, the key message is for candidates to read the sources very carefully, making sure that they understand both the details of the source and its overall argument. This will mean candidates are better prepared to tackle both questions.

General comments

Most candidates know that the **(a)** question requires an identification of similarities **and** differences, and that answers to **(b)** questions require an explanation of how each source either supports or challenges the prompt in the question.

Stronger responses supported the points made with precise quotations or direct paraphrases from the relevant sources. In some weaker responses candidates attempted to include long sections of quotation by starting a sentence and then using ellipses to join with a later section. This was rarely a successful way of showing support from the source and often led to confusion or lack of clarity. Support should take the form of brief, precise quotation, or paraphrase.

Weaker responses to **part (a)** were often rushed and in a significant minority of cases this was a result of the **part (a)** question being completed last. Although there is no required order for the question to be answered it should be noted that the **part (a)** question is designed to prepare candidates for the longer essay style question by concentrating on two sources and a particular issue. Candidates who completed **part (b)** first often found it difficult to refocus on **part (a)**.

Candidates sometimes made inappropriate points of comparison. They claimed similarities for points which were not actually similar and differences for points which were not different. If the comparisons cannot be properly validated, they cannot be credited. The comparisons should also be focused on the question, e.g. in **Section C** comparisons should focus on 'German attitudes to the USSR' rather than other similarities and differences between the sources.

The focus of the **(a)** question is to identify valid similarities and differences of the content of the sources. Weaker responses often included large sections of contextual knowledge or stock paragraphs of 'evaluation' rather than tackling the focus of the question. Although there are marks in the top level for commenting on the usefulness of the sources, the focus of the answer should be on making a developed comparison, i.e. identifying similarities and differences.

When analysing the sources many candidates confused themselves by picking out sections of text which ran counter to the overall message of the source. Some candidates were prone to just looking for similar words without thinking about their context. Thus, candidates should be careful to look at the whole source not dissected sections of it when making links to the questions and further judgements.

To achieve higher evaluation marks, it is necessary to explain why the nature, origin or purpose of the source makes it more or less useful when answering the question. One example of where this could be achieved was in **Section C, Source D**. Responses that dealt with this source successfully used their knowledge of the context to comment on the position of Chamberlain within ongoing discussions about appeasement and the situation he faced in parliament. As such, when using these ideas, it is important that candidates explain why this makes the source more or less useful for the question rather than just stating the date or type of source and saying it is unreliable.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: European Option: Liberalism and Nationalism in Germany 1815–71

Question 1

(a) How far do these sources agree about what happened in Silesia in 1844?

This question focused on the disruption by Silesian weavers during the mid-1840s and asked candidates to identify similarities and differences between the two extracts about what happened. Candidates responded well to this question and used their contextual knowledge of economic problems in Germany to use and explain the sources. Many responses were able to show where the extracts converged and diverged. In stronger responses this was accompanied by clear contextual knowledge that was used to clarify or further explain the areas of comparison and contrast. The best responses began to use the nature and purpose of both sources in order to explain why the sources differed.

(b) ‘Economic problems were the cause of demands for change in Germany by 1848.’ How far do these sources support this view?

This question was generally well attempted, and responses showed an ability to use the sources to support and challenge the assertion given in the question. Many stronger responses also recognised the complexity in some of the sources which meant they could both support and challenge the statement, e.g. in **Source B** where there was evidence of both economic and political demands being made by Silesian weavers. This demonstrated that candidates were reading sources closely. Most candidates were able to recognise both support and challenge in the sources and good responses used clear quotations or paraphrases to support their points. The better responses were then able to use their knowledge to contextualise the sources to explain them further and answer the question given. This was done best when specific sections of the sources were chosen and then explained or analysed further. There were also a significant minority of responses which started to use the provenance of the sources to weigh up the evidence they gave. This meant that answers began to evaluate sources for use in the question.

Section B: the American Option: The origins of the Civil War, 1820–61

Question 2

(a) Compare and contrast the arguments of James Polk concerning the annexation of Texas.

This question provided two extracts from James Polk in the months before and after the 1844 Presidential election. Some responses dealt with this well and could comment on how the different purpose and intervening months might help to explain the differences in Polk’s views of Texas. Candidates should be encouraged to read the sources they are given carefully rather than assuming that they know what the content will be from the attributions. Most responses were able to identify similarities and differences between the sources and better responses used contextual knowledge successfully. Again, candidates should avoid using time to write long descriptions of, e.g. the annexation of Texas which are not precisely relevant to the question asked.

- (b) **'The annexation of Texas was in the national interest.'** How far do the sources support this view?

This question required candidates to have some notion of what the phrase 'national interest' might mean in the context of the United States in the mid-1840s. This was often well attempted and there were many responses which were able to show how the sources both supported and challenged the assertion in the question. Better answers also showed a clear grasp of relevant contextual knowledge which helped them expand on and analyse the sources. This was particularly relevant when it came to the outcome of the election and the protests seen in the North (as described in **Source D**). This showed that candidates were beginning to read the sources beyond face value. Although many candidates described the provenance of the sources using stock evaluation, very few used this to test how useful the sources were when answering the question. Candidates should concentrate on making clear comments about how the nature, origin or purpose impacts on the utility of the source for answering the question rather than describing stock evaluation.

Section C: International Option: The League of Nations and international relations in the 1930s

Question 3

- (a) **Compare and contrast Sources A and C on German attitudes to the USSR.**

This question required candidates to focus on German attitudes to the USSR in both source extracts. Some candidates confused this with trying to look at wider issues of the Nazi–Soviet pact. Therefore, it should be remembered that **part (a)** questions have a specific focus which should be followed by candidates. Most candidates were able to recognise both similarities and differences in the sources as detailed in the mark scheme. Better responses were able to use their knowledge of the period to contextualise these sources and clarify or explain the positions taken in them. Some candidates got distracted from the content of the sources by their own knowledge of the events surrounding Hitler and the Soviet Union and this often led to extended sections of own knowledge which did not address the question asked. The best responses used their knowledge of the period to explain the differences between them using provenance which went beyond rote evaluation. Overall, this question was well attempted.

- (b) **How far do the sources support the view that the Nazi-Soviet Pact took the British government by surprise?**

Most responses engaged with the sources thoughtfully to offer support and challenge for the assertion stated in the question. There was plenty of scope to discuss what 'surprise' may have looked like for the British government and the best responses began to use their contextual knowledge to do this. Many candidates were able to use all four sources to support and challenge the assertion in the question. Most of these used evidence from the sources to clearly support their argument. The best answers used their knowledge of the period to evaluate the sources and explain how this evaluation made them more or less useful when answering the question. It was encouraging to see more responses attempt to use this method of evaluation rather than making stock phrases on the origin of sources. There was still some evidence of candidates using time to write long sections of contextual knowledge or rote provenance discussions. Neither of these were successful when answering the question and were often not credit worthy beyond Level 1 in the mark scheme. Some candidates struggled with interpreting Source B. It is important to remember that satirical cartoons may be included amongst the sources, so having a greater experience of this type of source would help improve some answers.

HISTORY

Paper 9489/21
Outline study

Key messages

- In **Part (a)** questions, candidates should focus on the key issue of causation, analysing a range of factors to show how they are connected and reach a supported conclusion.
- In **Part (b)** questions, candidates should address the question rather than the topic, maintain a balanced approach and ensure that arguments are appropriately supported.

General comments

Part (a) questions are about causation. Effective answers were distinguished by detailed knowledge and understanding of the reasons why a specific event occurred or why someone adopted a particular course of action. This is because causation can only be adequately explained by an appreciation of the combined effect of several factors, both long and short-term. The most effective responses focused clearly on the key issue of causation and contained analysis of a wide range of factors, demonstrating how they were connected and produced reasoned conclusions. The following is an example from a response to **Question 8(a)**.

Overall, the failure of the Genoa Conference would be the most significant reason why Franco-German relations did not improve before 1924. The entire conflict between France and Germany was started from reparations. The failure of the Genoa Conference failed to resolve the main catalyst and would go on to start the Ruhr Crisis. Had the Genoa Conference not failed, Franco-German relations could have improved.

The identification and explanation of some relevant causal factors was made by most candidates. Less successful answers tended to drift into narrative or descriptive accounts of how something occurred, rather than why. The weaker responses were characterised by a tendency to drift into irrelevancy and factual inaccuracy and/or confused chronology; they were over-reliant on vague and generalised assertions lacking appropriate factual support.

In **Part (b)** the awareness that historical issues can be interpreted in many different, and, often, contradictory ways was a characteristic of good answers. Other responses provided arguments which considered one interpretation of the issue. Responses which were less successful fell into one of two categories – narrative/descriptive accounts of the topic with only implicit reference to the actual question; relevant arguments based on factual support which was limited in range and depth. The weakest responses were often the result of confusion over the requirements of the question; they were characterised by factual inaccuracy and/or chronological confusion, assertions based on inadequate factual support or a tendency to drift into irrelevance (often by ignoring timeframes given in the question).

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Modern Europe, 1750–1921

Question 1: France, 1774–1814

- (a) **Explain why the Estates General was not able to deal with the issues France faced.**

Most candidates were able to display sound knowledge of the composition of the Estates General and the negative impact which this had on its ability to make agreed decisions. The strongest responses went beyond these general points, outlining specific problems which confronted France and explaining why the Estates General was unable to find practical solutions to them. Weaker

responses often provided a list of problems that led to the French Revolution, without linking this information to the specific focus of the question.

(b) How far did Napoleon as First Consul, 1799–1804, maintain the principles of the Revolution?

Good responses were able to produce high-quality analysis based on the deployment of appropriate factual evidence to aid the development of fully focused and balanced arguments. Highly effective responses were able to provide a brief outline of revolutionary principles to assess Napoleon's actions against. Less well-focused responses provided a narrative of Napoleon's action and/or an account of his military campaigns.

Question 2: The Industrial Revolution in Britain, 1750–1850.

(a) Explain why some of the lower classes resisted mechanisation.

Responses which were successful were able to explain why skilled workers resisted mechanisation (undermined their skills, reduced their wages, and led to a fall in their living standards). Relevant mention was made of the actions of Luddites in response to government inaction to relieve economic distress caused by mechanisation, as well as the actions of unskilled agricultural workers in responses to threshing machines reducing opportunities for work in the winter (Swing riots). Less successful answers were characterised by the lack of both specific arguments and extensive factual support.

(b) To what extent did transport developments bring about industrialisation?

Good responses appreciated the need to consider all forms of transport, such as roads, canals, and railways. They provided a detailed analysis of transport's relative significance as the cause of the Industrial Revolution against a variety of other influences. Weaker responses were generalised, producing undeveloped assertions regarding transport's impact (for example, that railways were vital for the movement of goods and people – a common misapprehension was that railways were important because they enabled the new urban working class to commute to work). Some, also, referenced developments in Germany and France, ignoring the topic focus of 'The Industrial Revolution in Britain, 1750–1850'.

Question 3: The Russian Revolution, 1894–1921

(a) Explain why the New Economic Policy was introduced in 1921.

Effective responses were characterised by the identification and explanation of several key factors (failings of War Communism/Kronstadt revolt/need to maintain power). A number of these responses would have benefitted by explaining the connections between the factors to provide a reasoned conclusion. Responses which were less successful often described the economy of the Tsarist regime, referring, for example, to Witte and Stolypin.

(b) 'Failure to achieve peace caused the fall of the Provisional Government in October 1917.' How far do you agree?

The strongest responses were characterised by the development of fully focused and balanced arguments, supported by appropriate and accurate factual evidence. The inherent limitations and weaknesses of the Provisional Government, and the magnitude of the problems which confronted it, were clearly understood, and set against other influences (e. g. Bolshevik tactics) leading to well-reasoned conclusions. Weaker responses either produced a narrative account of October 1917 or provided generalisations about not keeping internal law and order in Russia.

SECTION B: The History of the USA, 1820–1941

Question 4: The origins of the Civil War, 1820–61

(a) Explain why the involvement of foreign powers prolonged the Civil War.

Good answers were able to explain that the potential involvement of powers such as Britain on the side of the Confederacy stiffened the CSA's resolve to fight, so prolonging the war. An understanding was shown of the practical help offered, for example the ships built in British naval

yards, albeit by private companies, for the Confederacy. This helped delay the successful implementation of the Union's Anaconda plan. Answers which were less successful lacked focus and set out why the Civil War started or why the Emancipation Proclamation ensured no involvement by either Britain or France.

(b) To what extent was Johnson to blame for the disagreements with Congress over Reconstruction?

The most successful responses were based on focused, balanced and well supported assessment of the extent to which Johnson was to blame for the disagreements with Congress over Reconstruction. Good knowledge was shown about Johnson's vetoing of the Civil Rights Bill and his antagonism towards the Freedmen's Bureau. This was then analysed against the actions of Congress, such as overruling his veto and the manoeuvrings behind Johnson's impeachment. Some responses discussed, interestingly, how both Johnson and Congress were faced with a seemingly impossible task to implement Reconstruction following Lincoln's assassination, as he was, probably, the only politician who had the political weight to unite the various groups behind some form of Reconstruction policy, and even he had faced opposition to his Reconstruction proposals. Weaker responses relied on generalised assertions, frequently based on confusion over the respective roles of Johnson and Congress.

Question 5: The Gilded Age and Progressive Era, 1870s to 1920

(a) Explain why Progressives wanted to amend the Constitution in the years before 1920.

Successful responses were able to display good knowledge and analysis of the key amendments made to the Constitution during the Progressive era and why Progressives sought constitutional reform. Answers which were less successful lost the focus of 'Constitution' and provided accounts of legislative reform concerning big business, workers, and hygiene.

(b) 'The consequences of urbanisation in the late nineteenth century were dealt with effectively.' How far do you agree with this view?

The most effective responses included specific examples of the consequences of urbanisation and appropriate factual evidence to demonstrate how, and with what impact, they were confronted. This approach enabled the development of focused and balanced arguments, leading to well-reasoned conclusions. More moderately successful responses consisted largely of descriptive accounts of issues such as overcrowding and lack of sanitation. Responses which were less successful would have benefitted from greater range and depth.

Question 6: The Great Crash, the Great Depression and the New Deal policies, 1920–41

(a) Explain why Roosevelt began his presidency with a 'Hundred Days' plan.

Good responses were focused explicitly on the requirements of the question, identifying a range of social, economic, and political factors which encouraged/enabled Roosevelt to undertake his plan. Most candidates were able to describe the rapid and radical legislation which characterised the 'Hundred Days' plan, often in considerable detail. Weaker responses were based on a narrative approach in which explanation of Roosevelt's motives was confined to his desire to address the problems caused by the Great Depression.

(b) How far were government policies during the 1920s responsible for the Great Crash?

Most candidates were able to identify several factors (e. g. buying on the margin/over-production) that contributed to the Great Crash of 1929. In successful answers these were examined against government policies (*laissez-faire*/ tariffs/low interest rates) to reach an assessment of significance. Terms like 'buying on the margin' were not always fully understood but stronger responses used them confidently and explained their significance correctly. Less focused responses ignored the question's timeframe and described the actions taken by FDR regarding the Great Depression.

SECTION C: International Relations, 1870–1945

Question 7: Empire and the emergence of world powers, 1870–1919

(a) Explain why Germany was increasingly interested in having an overseas empire after 1880.

Responses which were effective showed good knowledge and understanding of events post-1880 and could identify and explain, in detail, several reasons why Germany became increasingly interested in acquiring an overseas empire. For example, pressure from industrialists and businessmen, combined with the adoption of a more aggressive foreign policy under the Kaiser. Weaker responses provided narrative accounts of German actions over the Kruger telegram and/or the Moroccan crises. Some responses lost the question's focus and described, at length, the naval race with Britain.

(b) To what extent had Japan become a world power by the end of the First World War?

The most successful responses often began by providing a definition of the term 'world power', followed by an assessment regarding whether Japan met such criteria by the end of the First World War. Some of these responses differentiated between the idea of Japan being a regional power by 1905 and a world power by the end of the First World War. Most candidates were able to write in some detail about Japan's rapid industrialisation, modernisation, and military development in the late nineteenth century. Many were able to describe Japan's successes in wars against China and Russia. Less successful responses tended to lack balance and be descriptive of events prior to 1914. Weaker responses ignored the timeframe and described events in the 1920s and 1930s.

Question 8: The League of Nations and international relations in the 1920s

(a) Explain why there was no improvement in Franco–German relations before 1924.

The most successful responses were characterised by detailed knowledge and understanding of a wide range of issues which caused tension between France and Germany before 1924. Less successful responses lacked range and explanatory depth. Weaker responses often wrote about the aims of USA and Britain and so lacked focus.

(b) How successful was the USSR in establishing links with other European powers in the 1920s?

The most successful responses were able to analyse specific issues such as the significance of the Rapallo Treaty and the reasons for the on-off trade agreements between Russia and Britain. Many answers referred to the pivotal importance of the Genoa Conference in establishing a firm relationship between Russia and Germany that endured until the end of the decade, though some candidates ignored the timeframe of the question and continued their analysis into the 1930s with the rise of Hitler. Less successful responses featured generalisations regarding French and British fear of communism, more specific evidence being restricted to largely unfocused reference to the Treaty of Rapallo.

Question 9: China and Japan, 1912–45

(a) Explain why Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

Good responses were based on a clear understanding of the impact of the USA's trade embargo on Japanese policy; while apparently willing to negotiate, Japan was continuing to expand in search of alternative supplies of vital resources, such as oil. The attack on Pearl Harbor was, therefore, perceived as an attempt to weaken the USA's Pacific fleet sufficiently to allow time for Japan to acquire these resources and further develop its own naval power in the region. Several of these responses would have benefitted by explaining the connections between the factors to provide a reasoned conclusion. Less successful responses, whilst aware of the deteriorating relations between Japan and the USA, did not provide detailed support as to why this led to the Japanese attack in December 1941. Weaker responses produced a narrative of the attack and its consequences.

(b) ‘The most important outcome of the Long March was the emergence of Mao Zedong as leader of The Chinese Communist Party.’ How far do you agree?

Responses which were successful were characterised by a detailed knowledge and understanding of the reasons why the Long March’s significance lay in the emergence of Mao as leader of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) – questioning of his position prior to the fifth encirclement campaign – his re-establishment of personal authority after the Zunyi Conference – the establishment of a new base at Yan’an. This was then set against other outcomes – the creation of a heroic narrative for the CCP due to its actions on the Long March, which increased peasant support – the survival, however depleted, of the CCP – to assess overall significance. Characteristics of less successful responses were descriptions of the Kuomintang’s (KMT) encirclement campaigns and/or unsupported statements that the Long March did/did not establish Mao’s leadership of the CCP.

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Key messages

- Candidates should read the available questions carefully in order to ensure that they choose the best options for themselves. It is not a good idea to start **part (a)** without checking what the focus of **part (b)** of a question is going to require and vice versa.
- Stronger responses often showed evidence of planning their responses. Having made a plan, it is a good idea to follow that plan and check carefully at the end of each question that nothing on the plan has been missed out of the final response.
- Candidates need to be fully aware of the meaning of time related phrases used in questions and of the chronology of events. For example, the late nineteenth century means from the around 1870 to 1900 and not beyond and similarly early twentieth century means from 1900 onward to a date up to the around 1930 that is appropriate to the question. If a question says from 1905 to 1914 it means just that period, so explanation of events after the start of the First World War should not be part of the answer.
- Some candidates also showed difficulty in distinguishing between social, economic and political factors and struggled when responding to questions that were focused specifically around one of these elements of an explanation in comparison to other factors (e.g., *How far were economic problems the cause of political instability in.....?*)

General comments

Responses were generally well structured and showed that many candidates had made good use of the extra time available to plan the content and structure of their essays. For **part (a)** questions candidates generally recognised the need to identify causal factors and many were able to offer at least some explanation of the part that one or more of these factors played in explaining a specific event. The best answers went on to identify links between these factors and could often establish some order of relative importance between them. Some candidates produced very detailed descriptions of events but provided very little explanation. A question that says 'Explain why ...' requires candidates to identify some important reasons for an event or action and say why they are important.

For **part (b)** questions most candidates were able to offer some explanation of events. Most recognised the need to consider different possibilities and made some effort at providing details to support different interpretations of events. Good responses included detailed knowledge of the topics and were characterised by carefully considered and well-supported analysis of alternative perspectives. The best responses were able to compare the relative strengths of different arguments and draw reasoned conclusions in answer to the specific questions that had been set. There were some very strong responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Modern Europe, 1750–1921

Question 1: France, 1774–1814

(a) Explain why the Directory was overthrown in 1799.

A popular question which was generally well answered. There were many good answers that identified a number of the problems that faced the Directory including the challenge of factions such as the Jacobins and Royalists, the continuation of the war, economic difficulties and the structure and working of the government. Many candidates were also aware of the significant role

played by Napoleon and the army in the fall of the Directory. Good answers handled a range of these factors well, explaining each one and, in the strongest responses, demonstrating how they linked together to form a complex analysis of failure. Weaker responses tended to write predominantly about the role of Napoleon and the army in the coup of 18 Brumaire – and a few went on to describe his role as First Consul – with little or no reference to other factors.

(b) 'Economic weakness was the main cause of political instability in France between 1790 and 1795'. How far do you agree with this view?

The quality of response often depended on how well candidates focused on the specified period of the question. Most candidates showed good knowledge of the problems that faced France in the period from 1790 to 1795 though some spent too much time providing background on the events that led up to the calling of the Estates General in 1789. Whilst this does provide background to the problems caused by the king, it is the king's actions in the period specified by the question that were relevant to providing a balanced answer. This included his response to the *Declaration of the Rights of the Man and of the Citizen* and the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy* contributed to the instability during this period in a way that supporting the Americans in the War of Independence did not. Good responses recognised this and explained the key issues with a good balance between economic and other problems. The best responses were able to show how they linked to create the overall issue of political instability. For example:

'Certainly economic weakness led to the hunger-led radicalism of the sans culottes and destabilised French society contributing heavily to the rise of political instability. At the same time the King himself and his actions was what had initiated the instability in the first place. Nevertheless, it was the war that completely destabilised French society and set in motion the era of political extremism with profound effects on every aspect of French life. For that reason it must be argued that war was in fact the main cause of instability in France between 1790 and 1795.'

Question 2: The Industrial Revolution in Britain, 1750–1850

(a) Explain why the Industrial Revolution had an impact on the lower classes.

Most candidates were able to provide some analysis of the consequences of industrialisation for the poor. Many candidates focused only on the negative effects, but these provided sound Level 3 answers which explained the urbanisation of former rural society, deterioration of living conditions and the dangerous working conditions that often prevailed in the early years of the industrial revolution, as factors having a significant effect of the lower classes. Other responses did include recognise that not all impacts were negative and explained positive changes that happened over a longer period. The strongest responses linked the different factors in a way that reached L4 for example:

'Though, in the short run, conditions for the lower classes in towns became very difficult; things began to improve because of government intervention, because of events like the cholera and typhoid epidemics, to create better working and living conditions.'

(b) To what extent did the growth of international markets contribute to industrialisation in Britain?

Some candidates struggled with the concept of 'international markets'. Despite showing good knowledge of a range of factors that contributed to industrialisation in Britain, responses which did not address how international markets contributed to this could not be awarded the higher levels of the mark scheme. Many responses provided general ideas about the advantages of international trade and growth in this area, whereas stronger responses included specific examples such as the expansion of the British East India Company, though few recognised the slave trade as part of this growing international market. Most candidates were able to provide clear evidence of internal factors promoting industrialisation and the best provided some judgement of relative importance, but few of these were seen.

Question 3: The Russian Revolution, 1894–1921

(a) Explain why the Provisional Government kept Russia in the First World War.

The reasons for the Provisional Government's choice were well understood by most candidates. Reasons included commitment to their allies, the need for support for their economy and some understanding of the possible consequences of leaving the war in terms of loss of territory to Germany and its allies. Most candidates identified at least one of these factors and a few were able to draw attention to how these were interconnected. For example:

'The Provisional Government felt a need to fulfil the country's commitment to its allies as a matter of national honour, but, perhaps more importantly, breaking the alliance would mean an end to the supplies and loans that came from the allies and on which the government depended.'

(b) 'Trotsky was key to the Bolsheviks winning the Russian Civil War.' How valid is this view?

Most candidates had a sound basic knowledge of the Russian Civil War and the relative advantages and disadvantages of the two sides and gave some reasoned analysis of why the Bolsheviks won. Weaker responses struggled to provide balance as they were not always able to distinguish what was specifically Trotsky's role in organising and co-ordinating the Red Army with some, for example, referencing the use of Terror and the work of the Cheka as part of Trotsky's operations when the Cheka was in fact under the control of Felix Dzerzhinsky. Better responses provided specific detail about Propaganda and War Communism and the role of Lenin as well as an assessment of the weaknesses of the White forces. The Strongest responses provided a well-balanced and justified judgement, having made comparative assessments throughout their response. For example:

'Overall, the victory of the Bolsheviks can be seen as a confirmation of Thomas Carlyle's 'great man theory'. The geographical position of the Red Army placed them in an immensely advantageous position from the start and it is true that the Bolsheviks were able to provide a vision for the future that made people inclined to support them, though the excellent use of propaganda was also important to their victory. Nevertheless, at the end of the day Trotsky's contribution in the Civil War outmatched each and every one of these advantages the Bolsheviks had, acting as the key to victory.'

Section B The history of the USA, 1820–1941

Question 4: The origins of the Civil War, 1820–61

(a) Explain why Presidential Reconstruction plans struggled to win support in Congress.

Most responses showed some understanding of the basic differences between the President and Congress but not all were clear on the details of Presidential Reconstruction as opposed to Congressional Reconstruction. Weaker answers were often unclear about the proposals of Lincoln and the amended proposals supported by Johnson. Good responses provided good analysis of Johnson's southern sympathies and were aware of the importance attached to the congressional super-majorities won by the Republicans in enabling Congress to resist Johnson's sympathetic approach towards the South.

(b) 'Weak leadership on both sides was the main reason the Civil War lasted as long as it did.' How far do you agree with this view?

There were some good responses to this question that handled well the need to compare the leadership of the two sides alongside other reasons for the length of the Civil War. Some candidates focused on the reasons why the War lasted so long and wrote in detail about different factors with relatively little comparison of the qualities of the respective leaderships. Better responses provided a detailed analysis of the respective qualities of Lincoln and Davis and of their generals, recognising the very different leadership offered by Lee compared to the over-cautious generals at Lincoln's disposal at the start of the War, as well as noting the change that came about when Grant took over. Beyond this, resources and objectives were amongst alternative factors suggested for the length of the War. Few candidates were able to suggest a supported overall judgement.

Question 5: The Gilded Age and Progressive Era, 1870s to 1920

(a) Explain why there were concerns about immigration in the late nineteenth century.

Most responses identified cultural differences, overcrowding and health concerns as key issues and some focused, at length, on the Boss System and the exploitation of immigrant communities to build corrupt self-promoting 'loyalty' structures in the major cities like New York and Chicago. Other responses wrote about the exploitation of cheap labour by 'robber barons'. Weaker responses were characterised by description rather than engaging with the issue of 'cause for concern'. Better responses were able to explain why one or more factors were considered issues but there were few attempts to identify any links between the different factors.

(b) 'Granting women the right to vote was the most significant reform of the Progressive Era.' How far do you agree with this view?

Some candidates wrote clear and well-constructed accounts showing a good understanding of a range of measures introduced in the Progressive Era. Others focused primarily on the Progressive Era Amendments (16 to 19) and discussed the comparative importance of these. Stronger responses extended their coverage to other major concerns like food, health and working conditions and the implementation of anti-trust legislation. Good responses often tried to reach reasoned conclusions for example....

'In conclusion the most significant reforms done in the Progressive Era were the corruption and anti-trust reforms since they were particularly highlighted by government. However, others may argue that the 19th amendment was the most important due to the massive women's suffrage movement and support. However, granting of the women's vote came much later...'

... but did not provide the supporting argument to justify their judgements in a way that would take them to the highest level of the mark scheme. Weaker responses often just provided some general description around the topic of 'votes for women' with little real grasp of the meaning of 'Progressive' in the US political context.

Question 6: The Great Crash, the Great Depression and the New Deal policies, 1920–41

(a) Explain why the New Deal faced criticism by some on the liberal left.

Many candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the opposition of Huey Long, Father Coughlin et al.. They showed a clear understanding of the policies supported by these 'left wing' liberals and so were able to describe them in detail as well as explaining why this made them unhappy with Roosevelt's policies. Weaker responses did not have a clear knowledge of these key characters and often wrote about general issues that were not features of left-wing opposition such as Roosevelt's court packing plans. Some simply provided broad descriptions of opposition to Roosevelt without addressing the criticisms of the liberal left.

(b) How far was President Hoover to blame for the impact of the Great Depression?

There is a case to be made that it was the boom conditions of the 1920s that created the economic bubble that was burst by the Wall Street Crash that was, to some extent, responsible for the depth and persistence of the Great Depression. Candidates who took this perspective either simply argued that Hoover just compounded the problem, with the phrase 'too little, too late' often used, or wrote extensively about the laissez faire approach of republican economics and why this made things worse often mentioning actions like the Smoot-Hawley Tariff (though few candidates understood that Hoover himself did not support the tariff). Better responses were also able to explain the measures that Hoover did take and why they were not successful.

Some answers considered whether Roosevelt's policies contributed in any way to the Great Depression even though it is generally agreed that recovery did not fully begin until the boost to the economy provided by US entry into the Second World War in 1941 and it is argued by some historians that this is because Roosevelt's measures actually delayed recovery.

Section C International history, 1870–1945

Question 7: Empire and the emergence of world powers, 1870–1919

(a) Explain why Cuba was the cause of conflict between Spain and the USA in 1898.

Many candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the reasons why the US was interested in Cuba which were predominantly economic, including imports of sugar and tobacco and increasing investment by US entrepreneurs in the island's economy. However, this was not always successfully linked to the reasons why this led to war against Spain. Also frequently included was the role of the Yellow Press in leading expansionist pressures on the US government to intervene in Cuba. Most candidates were aware of the significance of the Maine incident as a trigger for war. Better responses were able to link these events to the Cuban struggle for independence which had broken out in 1895 and which some Americans viewed as an opportunity to support a new democratic movement against the repressive imperial yoke of Spain. Some detailed responses were also able to incorporate relevant reference to the Monroe Doctrine in their account. There were many detailed and well-presented explanations, with the strongest able to establish relevant links between factors.

(b) How significant was German interference in the conflict between Britain and the Boers to British imperial policy in the late nineteenth century?

Few responses demonstrated an understanding of the full details of the German involvement in the crisis of relations between Britain and the Boers. Weak responses were a largely descriptive account of the Boer Wars, and their effects, with little reference to how it affected longer term British policy. There was significant confusion about the chronology of events with some responses suggesting that the congratulatory telegram was in response to Boer success in the First Boer War (1880–81) with no reference to the Jameson Raid (1895) which in fact triggered the Kaiser's message. Many candidates interpreted the term 'imperial policy' as simply meaning policy towards the Boers in South Africa, not recognising that it involved the whole British attitude toward the growth and defence of its Empire and its relationship with other imperial powers. Better responses considered the effect on Britain's policy of 'splendid isolation' and the fact the German interference had a significant effect on wider issues in Anglo-German relations.

Question 8: The League of Nations and international relations in the 1920s

(a) Explain why the League of Nations had only a limited membership when it first met in 1920.

There were some good responses to this question, often focused on the link between the foundations of the League and the Treaty itself with the idea that the League was a 'winners club' predominating as a reason for the limited membership. Weak responses did not really go beyond this assertion to explain what this meant. Many candidates also characterised the exclusion of Russia as being the result of fear of communism, failing to recognise that in 1920 the more important reason was Russia's desertion of the allies in signing of a separate peace treaty with Germany. Weaker responses often limited their focus to Germany and the USA and limited their answers to a description of some of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles without explaining why this limited membership.

(b) How successful were the Dawes and Young Plans in solving the problem of reparations?

Most candidates were aware of the purpose of the two Plans as an attempt to resolve issues over the reparations bill imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. Many were able to present some reasoned explanation of their effectiveness, but some responses had significant limitations. In weaker responses there was often no attempt to deal with the two Plans separately even though they occurred 5 years apart and had distinctly different objectives and were agreed in very different circumstances which influence the nature of the Plans. By clearly separating the two Plan better responses were able to make valid judgements:

Furthermore the Dawes Plan was a success as it helped Germany to rebuild their industries...the country was producing a lot more and had the money to pay the reparations which would not have been possible without the Dawes Plan. The Young Plan (1929) however cannot be called a success. It was meant to provide more loans and to reduce the overall amount of reparations but it

was never a success because in 1929 the Wall Street Crash sent the world into the Great Depression.

With proper explanation to back it up, a statement like this provides a clear distinction between the two Plans and the extent of their success in meeting their objectives.

Question 9: China and Japan, 1912–45

(a) Explain why there were massacres in Shanghai in 1927.

Most candidates were able to identify concerns about the growth in popularity of the Chinese Communist Party, especially amongst the rural peasantry, as a major cause of the massacre. Some answers went beyond this to consider other factors including the success of the Northern Expedition and Chiang's personal ambitions. Better responses were aware of all of these factors and produced well balanced and carefully supported explanation of the reasons behind the massacres.

Some candidates attempted to establish relative importance of different factors. For example: *'it can be suggested that the most important reason for the Shanghai massacres were political reasons that led Chiang to murder thousands of communists. The gain in popularity of the CCP can be seen as another reason for the Shanghai massacres which can be seen as less important as a political reason.* But without any real explanation of why one was more important than the other or how they may be linked such statements cannot be credited Level 4.

(b) How successful was the Kuomintang under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen?

There were some carefully constructed responses to this question that demonstrated a good understanding of different ways of interpreting 'success'. By considering questions such as 'Did the fact that the KMT controlled only a small part of China when Sun died mean that he was unsuccessful?' candidates provided detailed and balanced responses. Strong responses considered the lack of substantial gains in terms of progress against the Warlords and set this against the positive things that Sun did achieve, for example establishing the Three Principles as the basis of his party and of his co-operation with the Chinese Communist Party leading to the formation of the First United Front which was what led to eventual success in the Northern Expedition, even though this was after Sun's death. Balancing negative and positive achievements enabled candidates to make reasoned judgements about the success of Sun. Weaker responses tended to just describe events in China in the early twentieth century with reference to what Sun did rather than what he achieved.

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Key messages

- Candidates should read the available questions carefully in order to ensure that they choose the best options for themselves. It is not a good idea to start **part (a)** without checking what the focus of **part (b)** of a question is going to require and vice versa.
- Stronger responses often showed evidence of planning their responses. Having made a plan, it is a good idea to follow that plan and check carefully at the end of each question that nothing on the plan has been missed out of the final response.
- Candidates need to be fully aware of the meaning of time related phrases used in questions and of the chronology of events. For example, the late nineteenth century means from the around 1870 to 1900 and not beyond and similarly early twentieth century means from 1900 onward to a date up to the around 1930 that is appropriate to the question. If a question says from 1906 to 1914 it means just that period, so explanation of events after the start of the First World War should not be part of the answer.
- Some candidates also showed difficulty in distinguishing between social, economic and political factors and struggled when responding to questions that were focused specifically around one of these elements of an explanation in comparison to other factors (e.g., *How far were economic problems the cause of political instability in.....?*)

General comments

Responses were generally well structured and showed that many candidates had made good use of the extra time available to plan the content and structure of their essays. For **part (a)** questions candidates generally recognised the need to identify causal factors and many were able to offer at least some explanation of the part that one or more of these factors played in explaining a specific event. The best answers went on to identify links between these factors and could often establish some order of relative importance between them. Some candidates produced very detailed descriptions of events but provided very little explanation. A question that says 'Explain why ...' requires candidates to identify some important reasons for an event or action and say why they are important.

For **part (b)** questions most candidates were able to offer some explanation of events. Most recognised the need to consider different possibilities and made some effort at providing details to support different interpretations of events. Good responses included detailed knowledge of the topics and were characterised by carefully considered and well-supported analysis of alternative perspectives. The best responses were able to compare the relative strengths of different arguments and draw reasoned conclusions in answer to the specific questions that had been set. There were some very strong responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Modern Europe, 1750–1921

Question 1: France, 1774–1814

(a) Explain why Napoleon introduced the Civil Code.

There was a range of understanding of the Civil Code well amongst answers to this question. Stronger responses recognised that it was a legal code that united the disparate legal systems that previously existed in France and confirmed many of the major legal changes of the Revolution, getting rid of outdated feudal laws and customs. The best responses confined themselves to this

and produced well-structured and detailed explanations of the benefits of the new Civil Code both for the people of France and for Napoleon's reputation. The main characteristic of weaker responses was that they did not demonstrate clear understanding of the purpose of the Civil Code. Candidates in this category simply included all the reforms that Napoleon carried out, as part of his reform of the law and so were not properly focused on the question.

(b) 'Louis XVI brought about his own downfall'. How far do you agree with this view?

There were some good responses to this question from candidates with a good understanding of the key events of the French Revolution and the driving forces behind them. These provided clear explanation of the role Louis played and his failure to take advantage of opportunities to establish a more democratic government with the monarchy at its head. Key events like his opposition to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy coupled with key mistakes like the Flight to Varennes formed the basis of the case against Louis. This was contrasted with matters that were beyond his control like the severe inflation that inflamed the Paris mob, or the part played by the leaders or extremist republican groups in inciting and directing anti-monarchical protest. Weaker responses often included lengthy narratives, sometimes heavily focused on events before 1789, that provided little evidence to support or challenge the assertion in the question.

Question 2: The Industrial Revolution in Britain, 1750–1850

(a) Explain why the railways increased industrialisation.

There were a lot of very strong responses to this question along with some that were anachronistic in their assumptions about the use of railways. The latter tended to view trains as a way of getting to work, when in fact commuting only became a feature of industrial Britain at a point where industrialisation was fully established, and the continuing growth of towns led to increasing suburban development. Better responses wrote about things like the development of markets and ports, movement of raw materials and the development of industries associated with railways like iron and steel and coal mining.

(b) How far was the political system changed by the Industrial Revolution in the period 1800–50?

This essay caused significant problems for some candidates who were unable to differentiate changes in the political system from the economic and social changes of the period. Weaker responses were characterised by a description of general changes in society produced by the industrial revolution. Better responses did recognise some of the key changes, with the best candidates demonstrating the limitations of the political changes that did occur as well as linking the changes that were made to the development of industries and new urban centres like Manchester and Birmingham. Most candidates recognised that the Great Reform Act of 1832 was of significance and good answers linked this to the pressure from the growing middle class for political representation to match their growing economic importance. Other good responses recognised the importance of this in identifying Robert Peel as a key example of how the middle classes were increasing able to reach the highest levels in the political system and how this was a move that enabled the aristocracy to retain overall control as the extension of the franchise was actually very limited and much of the reform bill was just about correcting abuses like rotten boroughs. Strong responses also were able to identify rising political activity amongst the lower classes outside the formal political system. Movements such as the Luddites, the development of trade unions and the Chartist movement, were often used effectively as examples of growing working-class political activity that resulted from industrialisation whilst recognising that these still did not change the formal political system.

Question 3: The Russian Revolution, 1894–1921

(a) Explain why the Bolshevik government used terror.

Most answers to this question focused on the key purpose of '...consolidating their control over Russia'. Many went on to explain suppression of political opponents using the newly created Cheka and the use of repressive measures to extract vital supplies for the war effort from the peasantry.

Following the October Revolution the Bolsheviks only controlled the major cities...so it was vital to consolidate their power and their only hope of creating a socialist state was by employing the

Cheka to prevent any counter-revolutionaries gaining support. They were also preparing for civil war against the Whites and so imposed terror on the peasants to appropriate grain to ensure enough food for the Red Army.

Some candidates also included the severe measures used by Trotsky to ensure the loyalty and support of the army, but few candidates went beyond these basic ideas.

(b) 'Between 1906–14 the Tsarist regime had overcome the opposition to it.' How far do you agree with this statement?

Most candidates produced effective responses, but a few did not acknowledge the time frame of the question and wrote at length about either factors that led to the 1905 revolution or the effects of the First World War on opposition to the tsarist regime, neither of which were relevant to the question. Better responses were clear and included well-supported arguments about the success of the government in satisfying or suppressing possible opponents but then did not go on to provide much evidence of continuing opposition beyond a short reference to the Lena Goldfields Massacre.

Some candidates produced reasoned conclusions for example:

These years still saw opposition to the regime. The idea of concessions in 1906 were merely cosmetic and the troubles of the people were still persisting. They were only limited by the brutal suppression by the army and using Stolypin's repressive measures. Hence it was conceivably only a façade that opposition had been overcome by 1914.

However, they did not always back these up with detailed analysis or they did not provide evidence to show how both sides of the argument might be justified, and so a conclusion like this, whilst valid, would not be adequately supported.

Section B The history of the USA, 1820–1941

Question 4: The origins of the Civil War, 1820–61

(a) Explain why Grant was appointed commander of the Union forces in March 1864.

There were some good responses to this question with candidates demonstrating clear awareness of the weakness of Unionist generals like McClelland, Burnside et al. compared to the positive leadership of Lee and Jackson for the Confederacy. Good responses demonstrated an awareness of Grant's importance in changing the dynamic of the war in the west and breaking the Confederate grip on the Mississippi in the siege of Vicksburg and of Lincoln's need to adopt a new strategy in the face of growing concerns about the war and the fact that he was facing a re-election race in 1864. Candidates who were able to combine all these factors were able to produce a balanced and successful analysis of the reasons for Grant's appointment. Less successful responses tended to just describe what Grant did including actions after he was appointed as overall commander which were not relevant to the question of why he was appointed.

(b) 'The Compromise of 1877 was agreed because Reconstruction had failed.' How far do you agree with this view?

There were few responses to this question and often they were poorly structured and limited in detail. Candidates often knew something of the Reconstruction Amendments, but few seemed to have significant knowledge about the Compromise of 1877, what it involved and why it was agreed between the Republicans and Democrats. Many of the responses provided only a description of some of the features of Reconstruction listing specific actions and events without considering their success or failure. Few responses included anything about the Presidency of Grant and how he dealt with the problems of Reconstruction or considered other reasons for the Compromise that were independent of success or failure, such as the economic crisis of 1873–6 and its effects on the capacity of government to maintain Reconstruction. Stronger responses did try to identify the objectives of Reconstruction and look at how far they had been achieved by 1877, but these were limited.

Question 5: The Gilded Age and Progressive Era, 1870s to 1920

- (a) **Explain why the growth of railroads was important to the economy in the late nineteenth century.**

Successful responses to this question focused on the expansion of trade, movement of population to the west and generation of income for further investment, as key consequences of the development of railways. A few candidates wrote specifically about the role of Cornelius Vanderbilt and his control of the railways and the development of industry under the leadership of similar entrepreneurs. Most accounts were more general and linked economic growth to the development of the West including the importance of settling homesteaders on the land that the railways were given as an incentive to extend westwards. Most candidates produced sound responses with the strongest responses establishing some links between the factors to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

- (b) **To what extent was social improvement the aim of the Progressive Movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?**

Whilst the majority of responses showed some understanding and knowledge of the reforms of the Progressive Presidents, many struggled to tackle the issue of 'social improvement'. Answers often contained descriptions about reforms of the period including the Progressive Amendments (16 – 19), votes for women and prohibition. The Progressive Amendments were mostly not about social improvement, and where relevant content was deployed it was often not really linked to the focus of the question. More successful responses were more secure in their knowledge of this period including having an awareness of failures in the area of social improvement, particularly relating to the issues of racial minorities.

Question 6: The Great Crash, the Great Depression and the New Deal policies, 1920–41

- (a) **Explain why the Great Depression lasted for so long.**

Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the issues and were able to provide explanation of some factors. The most common argument was that the failure to act decisively and well, by Hoover's administration, was an important reason for the Depression lasting so long and that what Hoover did do was arguably 'too little too late'. The strongest responses ventured into the trickier analysis of Roosevelt's contribution, arguing that the Depression did not completely end until the early 1940s and that some of Roosevelt's policies could be seen as possibly prolonging some aspects of the Depression. Some weaker responses tried to argue that it was the conditions that created the Wall Street Crash that caused the perpetuation of the problems, but these were often a description of events without any developed explanation of how this contributed to the length of the Depression.

- (b) **'Opposition from the Supreme Court was the most significant challenge faced by Roosevelt's New Deal.' How far do you agree?**

Many of the candidates who attempted this question struggled with the focus. Most were able to provide some description of the problems that Roosevelt had with the Supreme Court, citing examples like the 'Sick Chicken Case' as a way in which the Supreme Court challenged and undermined the measures of the First New Deal. However, for some this became the main focus of their essays as they went on to try and explain Roosevelt's court packing proposal and proposed retirement age. Some candidates understood this very well, others not so clearly but, regardless of this, these responses were not focused on the question which required the consideration of alternative threats to the New Deal like the left- and right-wing opposition to different elements of Roosevelt's plans. This failure led to a lack of balance in considering the comparative significance of the threat of the Supreme Court. There were few good responses to this question.

Section C International history, 1870–1945

Question 7: Empire and the emergence of world powers, 1870–1919

(a) Explain why the Fashoda incident led to an improvement in Anglo–French relations.

This was a topic that was clearly understood by a majority of candidates and was well summed up in the following conclusion:

‘...the Fashoda incident’s close call, uncomfortable unpredictability and strange driving forces made it a huge red flag for the powers who did not want war. Subsequently close diplomatic ties were born to stop it from occurring again, leading to improved Anglo-French relations.’

To reach this sort of judgement stronger responses covered the particulars of the confrontation and the wider issues of the Scramble for Africa and the nature of relations between the major powers of Europe. There was a recognition that for both France and Britain this was about more than relations in Africa, it was also about their perception of the growing threat of Germany’s expansive foreign policy under Kaiser Wilhelm II. Most responses included at least one explained factor for the improvement of relations. The Strongest answers followed the argument through to its logical conclusion in the Entente Cordiale.

(b) ‘The interests of big business were the key to changes in US foreign policy in the late nineteenth century.’ How far do you agree?

There were some well-balanced answers to this question though weaker answers did not seem to recognise that ‘the late nineteenth century’ meant only up to 1900, and as a result included details on later events like the Roosevelt Corollary and the Great White Fleet.

Good responses linked the case for ‘big business’ to the economic panic of 1893, the rapid expansion of industry in this period and the need for expanding markets, and the effects of the closing of the frontier. For an alternative analysis of policy changes good responses turned to the involvement in the Spanish–American War and the surge of expansionist support as a result of the acquisition of former Spanish territories across the Caribbean and the Pacific, the role the ‘yellow press’ in supporting this and the ambitions of McKinley and, in a few instances, the importance of the concept of Manifest Destiny in pursuing expansion beyond the US shores once the frontier was closed. The best responses considered the relative importance of these factors and incorporated them into a balanced conclusion which justified the judgement they were making.

Question 8: The League of Nations and international relations in the 1920s

(a) Explain why the French were dissatisfied with the Treaty of Versailles.

Most candidates were able to offer some explanation of why the French were dissatisfied with the Treaty of Versailles and demonstrated that due to the different objectives of the Big Three France was unable to obtain the harsh treatment of Germany that it wanted. Stronger responses built on this outline argument to develop an analysis of specific points of dissatisfaction. This was most successful when its starting point was a consideration of the detailed demands of Clemenceau linked with an explanation of how specific terms of the Treaty failed to meet these expectations. Weaker responses just described the terms of the Treaty of Versailles with some general assertions about French dissatisfaction without any explanation of why there was such dissatisfaction.

(b) How successful was the League of Nations in settling international territorial disputes in the 1920s?

Most candidates demonstrated good understanding of the work of the League of Nations in the 1920s and were able to provide at some examples of the positive achievements of the League and of its failures. Good responses were able to give detailed explanations of these successes and failures and the best produced valid judgements of the reasons for varying levels of success in different situations and then link this evidence to reach a reasoned conclusion. For example:

In conclusion the League was reasonably successful in solving international disputes. Evidence shows it as very successful in dealing with disputes between smaller nations like Sweden and

Finland and in sorting out border disputes created by the Versailles settlement. It was less successful in disputes involving the bigger powers like Corfu where Mussolini ignored the instructions of the League. Even if the major powers were not directly involved their intervention restricted the League's action as in the French support of Poland over Vilnius, which overall undermined and weakened the League in the long run.

Question 9: China and Japan, 1912–45

(a) Explain why war broke out between Japan and China in 1937.

Most candidates were aware of the general issue of Japanese expansionism. In weaker response there was a limited understanding of the geography of China or the timeline of Japanese incursions. Some suggested that the war was a direct result of the invasion of Manchuria with little concept of the timeline of events. Better responses provided details of the Marco Polo Bridge incident coupled with background detail and some idea of the issues within China at the time and the formation of the Second United Front. This agreement between the KMT and the CCP, was reached as a result of the Xi'an incident and led to a more aggressive nationalistic approach by the Chinese.

(b) How important was militarism in the failure of democracy in Japan in the 1930s?

There were some well-constructed responses to this question with good detail on both the direct action of the military and the support given by ultra nationalist groups like the 'Cherry Blossom Society' to the concept of the Showa Restoration. The best responses contrasted this with a range of other factors including economic issues, particularly those raised by the Great Depression and the failure of the democratic government to deal with them, and more general issues like a lack of trust in democratic ideas and accusations of corruption and nepotism within the democratic system. Weaker responses did include some discussion of the aggressive role of the army, but this was often restricted to their action in Manchuria with very little evidence of understanding of the wider problems of weak democratic institutions and the other issues that undermined democratic government. Such an approach tended to provide descriptive and unbalanced responses.

HISTORY

Paper 9489/31
Interpretation Question

Key messages

- To write effective responses candidates need to develop an understanding of the argument of the extract in its entirety. It is vital that candidates allocate time to read and think about the extract. It is notable that the best responses reflect a confidence in handling the extract which comes from working through it carefully before writing their response.
- The purpose of this paper is for candidates to identify and explain the historian's interpretation and approach. The text provided should be used to support points made about the messages and interpretation of the extract. The focus of the answer should be on the extract.
- The accurate use of historiographical labels can be useful in providing a framework for responses. However, this proved challenging for some candidates and there was some evidence of labels being misunderstood and misapplied. This was particularly evident in responses to **Question 2**.

General comments

Most responses demonstrated positive qualities and showed some ability to engage with the argument presented in the extract. The strongest responses were fully focused on the extract and demonstrated complete understanding by explaining both elements of the main argument. Most answers were complete and many reached a reasoned conclusion. It was notable that the most effective responses showed evidence of planning. Such responses were fluent, demonstrated confidence in handling the ideas of the extract and showed an ability to appreciate the argument in its entirety. These responses understood how the extract was constructed and supported their points with detailed references, often showing a perceptive reading of the extract. Many candidates demonstrated a sound approach by explaining and supporting one element of the main argument. Almost all saw the extract as an interpretation and offered support from the extract for relevant sub-messages.

Candidates who worked through the extract on a paragraph by paragraph basis (or sometimes line by line) generally presented less coherent arguments. For instance, it was common for responses to **Question 2** to contain contradictory messages about whether Hitler had planned the Final Solution and this resulted from a lack of comprehension of the whole of the argument in the extract. Many responses would have benefited from more careful reading and planning. While the best responses selected elements from the extract to support the whole argument, weaker responses tended to focus on the content of a single paragraph. They often saw this as a separate argument from the rest of the extract and this meant they did not demonstrate secure understanding.

Knowing how to detect the interpretation in the extract is key to writing an effective response. Comprehension of what the extract says is an important starting point. For instance, in **Question 3** the historian states that *'The core assumption was that Soviet Russia was a dangerous country'*. Many candidates read this as being the view of the historian, missing that it was described as an assumption made by American policymakers. More important in identifying the interpretation is to consider what the historian means by including certain ideas. Often responses selected a statement in the extract and wrote about it without showing how it related to the interpretation. For instance, some responses picked up that Americans made assumptions about the Soviet Union but did not show their relevance to the historian's argument about how the Cold War developed. Candidates should stop and ask themselves, 'what does this mean for the interpretation?' Working through the extract with a focus on the opinion of the historian will lead to a better understanding of the overall message that the historian wishes to convey.

Many answers to both **Questions 2** and **3** started with a lengthy description of schools of thought, often demonstrating flawed understanding of labels and not engaging with the extract. Answers should be about the opinion of the historian and how this can be used to infer the overall interpretation. The best answers follow a clear structure. For example, candidates stated an inference about the historian's ideas such as, *'this historian is post-revisionist because they blame neither side for starting the Cold War.'* They went to support this from the extract by quoting the historian's view that the United States and Soviet Union *'had not been following confrontational blueprints from an early stage'*. This structure helps candidates to avoid writing about what the extract says without focusing on the interpretation. Staying focused on the historian and their argument helps candidates to avoid irrelevance, such as lengthy discussion of other historians' views or detailed digressions into the context.

The use of labels can be helpful to a candidate when trying to describe the interpretation contained in the extract. Their accurate use demonstrates an understanding of the historiography which is an important part of the context for this paper. However, wrongly used or misunderstood labels demonstrates insecure understanding. This was most notable in responses to **Question 2** where it became clear that many candidates did not understand the terms 'functionalist' and 'structuralist', with a significant proportion thinking that these terms were interchangeable. This issue was less pronounced in responses to **Question 3** but there is an issue with a minority of responses where the differences between post-revisionism and post-post-revisionism were not understood. Many answers to both **Questions 2** and **3** started with a lengthy description of schools of thought, often demonstrating flawed understanding and not engaging with the argument in the extract in question.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: The origins of the First World War

There were too few responses to make general comment appropriate.

Section B: The Holocaust

The main interpretation of the historian was that the Final Solution was not pre-planned, but that the nature of the Nazi State meant it could not happen without Hitler's authorisation or approval. This proved a challenging argument for some candidates to grasp. The most effective answers recognised both aspects of the interpretation and illustrated them using material from the extract. The key was to understand that the extract addressed Hitler's responsibility for the Final Solution without arguing that genocide was intended from the outset. The extract could be argued to be entirely functionalist as the whole of the interpretation hinged on the situation in late 1941. While most responses appreciated the argument that the genocide was improvised, there was limited discussion of the context of wartime. Some candidates noted that the dates in the extract were from the 1940s but missed the significance of this for the interpretation. Many understood elements of the argument and put forward the view that the extract represented a synthesis approach. These responses saw arguments about a lack of planning as evidence of a functionalist approach while messages about the role of Hitler were taken as evidence of an intentionalist strand in the argument. However, such responses often lacked a clear understanding of what the labels meant and tended to be contradictory. Responses which took a paragraph by paragraph approach often ran into difficulty when discussing the way Hitler was portrayed in the extract. The reference in paragraph two to the *'responsibility and initiative'* not being Hitler's alone was often taken as evidence that Hitler was not to blame. Many candidates found themselves contradicting this with their analysis of paragraph three which started with, *'Indications pointing to his responsibility are nonetheless overwhelming.'* Careful reading and planning would have helped these candidates to make sense of how the extract saw Hitler's role within the structure of the Nazi state. Weaker answers sometimes selected a lengthy quote from each paragraph, explained what it meant and added some contextual knowledge. At best, this highly selective approach demonstrated a partial understanding of the extract. The weakest responses wrote a summarised the extract or wrote about the context.

Section C: The origins and development of the Cold War, 1941–50

The central argument of the historian was that neither side deliberately started the Cold War, and that its cause was mutual misunderstanding. The strongest responses demonstrated a complete understanding by recognising both aspects of the interpretation, illustrating them using material from the extract. Sound answers picked up details from the extract such as *'the basic assumption which each side had developed about the other were allowed to dictate policy'* to show that both sides were responsible for the misunderstanding which developed. The difference between these answers and the very best was their lack of focus on the first element of the interpretation that neither was to blame. Most responses understood that

this was a post-revisionist extract. Those demonstrating a partial understanding of the extract tended to focus on sub-messages about ideology. Candidates often supported this from the extract by quoting the historian's comment in the second paragraph, *'The public declarations of ideology made by both sides created problems.'* While this was a valid sub-message, these answers missed ideology linked to the main argument as being influential on the misunderstanding which developed. There was more discussion of the United States in the extract and some were misled into thinking that the argument was revisionist. A significant minority of responses made an assertion that the extract was post-revisionist but gave a response which was almost entirely based on their contextual knowledge of the Cold War. For instance, the idea that tension developed between the United States and Soviet Union was seen as an opportunity to write about disputes over Berlin and the Blockade. In a minority of responses, the contextual knowledge deployed strayed far outside the time constraints of the syllabus (1945 to 1950) and it was not uncommon to see detailed discussion of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Such responses could be improved by spending more time focusing on the argument within the extract rather than trying to illustrate what it said from general knowledge about the events of the Cold War.

HISTORY

<p>Paper 9489/32 Interpretation Question</p>
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Key messages

- To write effective responses candidates need to develop an understanding of the argument in the extract in its entirety. It is vital that they allocate time to read through and think about the extract. An additional time allocation has been made for this revised A Level paper and it is notable that the best responses reflect a confidence in handling the extract which comes from working through it carefully before writing their response.
- Weaker responses often resulted from taking a paragraph by paragraph approach to the extract. Such responses were sometimes contradictory and did not fully engage with the historian's interpretation.
- The purpose of this paper is to identify and explain the historian's interpretation and approach. The text provided should be used to support points made about the messages and interpretation of the extract. The focus of the answer should be on the extract. While some references to context may be valid, the extract is not provided as an opportunity to write about the topic or to evaluate the opinions of the historian.

General comments

Most responses demonstrated positive qualities and showed an ability to engage with the argument presented in the extract. The strongest responses were fully focused and demonstrated complete understanding of the interpretation and approach by explaining both elements of the main argument. Most answers were complete and many reached a reasoned conclusion. It was notable that the most effective responses showed evidence of having planned their answer in advance. Such responses were fluent, demonstrated confidence in handling the ideas of the extract and showed an ability to appreciate the argument in its entirety. These responses understood how the extract was constructed and supported their points with detailed references, often showing a perceptive reading of the extract. Many demonstrated a sound approach by explaining and supporting one element of the main argument. Almost all candidates saw the extract as an interpretation and offered some support for relevant sub-messages.

Candidates who worked through the extract on a paragraph by paragraph basis generally presented less coherent arguments. For instance, responses to **Question 2** sometimes contained contradictory messages about whether Hitler had planned the Final Solution and this resulted from a lack of focus on the overall argument of the extract. Many responses would have benefited from more careful reading and planning. While the best responses contained precisely selected elements from the extract to support their answer, weaker responses tended to focus on the argument in a single paragraph. They often saw this as a separate entity from the rest of the extract and this meant they did not demonstrate a secure understanding of the argument.

As the question asks '*what can you learn from this extract*' about the historian's interpretation, candidates need to know how to detect the interpretation. The purpose is to focus on what can be learned from what the extract says rather than simply focus on what is said. Responses which correctly identify and support the elements of the main argument demonstrate this ability. They recognise that extracts contain a mixture of fact and opinion and that understanding the interpretation means considering which facts the historian has employed and what their opinions are. For instance, statement '*the USSR had a Marxist-Leninist ideology*' is based on fact. Arguing that the United States saw this fact '*as a threat and overestimated it*' is an opinion. The key element is to identify how the author uses these to develop their interpretation.

The best responses have a clear structure and are focused on the task from the outset. Many responses to both **Questions 2** and **3** started with introductions which were not focused on the extract, often offering a description of different schools of thought. More effective introductions outlined their overall understanding of the interpretation and argument of the historian. Answers should be about the opinion of the historian and how this can be used to infer the overall interpretation. For example, effective responses state an inference they have made about the historian's ideas such as, *'I think this historian is revisionist because they blame the USA for starting the Cold War.* They then go on to support this from the extract by arguing that the historian writes that *'US policymakers made another significant error'*. This structure helps candidates to avoid simply writing about what the extract says without focusing on the interpretation.

To write an effective response, candidates should plan their answer carefully in advance. This enables them to offer a proper explanation, supported by the extract. Planning also means that responses are more focused and precise. Maintaining a focus on the historian and their argument helps candidates to avoid irrelevance such as lengthy descriptions of the context. For example, some responses to **Question 2** used the reference in the extract to Hitler's anti-Semitism as an opportunity to write about policies which Hitler introduced against the Jews. Answers sometimes lose focus through evaluating the argument of the historian (often arguing that what they say is wrong which is not the point of this exercise). In some instances, particularly in response to **Question 3**, candidates speculated about what the historian would have thought about events which were not addressed in the extract. Such diversions suggest a lack of focus on extract.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: The origins of the First World War.

The central argument of the historian was that the objectives of German policy, both before and during 1914, knowingly created the likelihood of war and that Germany therefore was more responsible for the outbreak of war than any other nation. The best responses were fully focused on both elements of the argument, often making the perceptive comment that the historian had purposely chosen to focus on Germany and not address arguments about wider responsibility. This was often the key discriminator between complete and sound answers. Most responses understood the argument that Germany was deliberately pursuing a policy which would lead to war and some used their understanding of the concept of 'Weltpolitik' to interpret the extract. However, some were distracted by references to Austria and Russia, seeing these as signs of a 'shared responsibility' argument. Better answers saw that Germany was pushing Austria and that it was Germany which took the 'decision to go to war'. Weaker answers, of which there were few, focused on the idea of who could be blamed for the war without developing a proper focus on what was argued.

Section B: The Holocaust

The central argument of the historian who wrote this extract was that late in 1941 there was still uncertainty over whether there was a policy of genocide and that Himmler aimed to fill this policy vacuum by working towards the Führer. The best answers recognised these aspects of the interpretation and illustrated them using material from the extract. Consideration of the timing of events in the extract was key to understanding the interpretation. The author argued that now Germany was at war with the United States, Hitler had the opportunity to radicalise policy. Central to the argument was the idea that although Jews were already being murdered, there was no explicit order or plan in place and that Himmler was determined to resolve this situation. Answers which understood the importance of the timing used this as evidence to support a functionalist argument, claiming that progress in the war was the key driver of genocide. However, the idea of working towards the Führer is a structuralist argument and therefore many strong responses concluded that the interpretation had synthesis characteristics. Sound answers were often based on the idea of synthesis but without focusing on both elements of the argument. Most commonly the issue about progress in the war was missed. Weaker answers tended to be distracted by other aspects of the extract, such as the role of Hitler, which was argued as an intentionalist element, or overstated the structuralism in the extract. Among the weaker answers, there were some which used the extract as an opportunity to write about the context, often supporting what the historian was arguing from their knowledge rather than the extract. Others criticised the argument which was put forward. Neither of these approaches is sound and leads to responses which lack focus. The weakest answers simply paraphrased points in the extract or wrote about the Holocaust with no reference to the extract.

Section C: The origins and development of the Cold War, 1941–50

The central argument of the historian was that the United States was wrong to see the Soviet Union as expansionist, and wrong to make demands on the Soviet Union which were impossible to accept based on the Soviet Union's security needs. The best answers recognised these aspects of the interpretation and illustrated them using material from the extract. Complete understanding was based on an explanation of how both the ideas and policies of the United States were argued as being 'wrong'. Sound understanding was usually demonstrated by basing the response on the 'wrong ideas' element. These answers had plenty of material from the extract to use, and usually concluded that the historian's approach was revisionist as it was squarely focused on the United States making mistakes. It was less common to see responses which were properly based on the idea that the United States pursued the wrong policies. Often it was argued that the extract exonerated the Soviet Union and justified its aims. This was not quite what was argued, the Soviet Union being described as 'untrustworthy and cruel' in the first paragraph as an indication of the author's opinion. In some responses this was caused by taking a paragraph by paragraph approach. Although the extract was still seen as broadly revisionist, the arguments about Stalin's actions being justified were given greater significance than they deserved. Of the weaker responses, some argued in favour of a generic revisionist argument based on issues such as economic expansionism on the part of the United States which was not discussed in the extract. Some weakened their answers through a lack of focus on the last paragraph and this highlights the need to work through the whole of the extract before deciding on the interpretation and starting the response. The weakest answers simply paraphrased points in the extract or wrote about the Cold War with no reference to the extract.

HISTORY

Paper 9489/33
Interpretations Question

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

HISTORY

Paper 9489/41
Depth study

Key points

- Effective answers responded directly to the specific demands of the questions rather than writing in more general terms about a topic.
- It is important that knowledge is used to support explanations and judgements rather than making comments that are simple generalisation or assertion.
- To fully respond to command words within the questions such as 'assess', 'evaluate' and 'discuss' candidates need to demonstrate their ability to deploy higher level skills such as supported judgement and evaluation.

General comments

The strongest responses were thoughtful, well-informed and addressed the questions directly. Such responses also included sustained analysis and informed judgement. More modest answers showed knowledge but did not direct it effectively at the question. Equally, some answers showed some understanding of issues but did not have enough knowledge to develop explanations and arguments. The weakest responses included very limited knowledge and understanding.

With regards to the key points above, it is important that the questions should be read with care to ensure that the material chosen is being used to answer the questions directly. For example, if a question asks for consideration of economic effects, these should be the focus of the answer throughout. This was particularly important for **Questions 5** and **7** which were quite specifically focused on the US economy. It is also important to look at any dates in the question. For example, **Question 1** was focused on 1922 and **Question 3** concerned the period 1929 to 1933. Material outside these dates ran the risk of being irrelevant and leading to writing about the topic rather than the question.

Wherever possible, responses should support explanations and judgements with factual content. In some responses there was a tendency to separate knowledge and analysis and to include information for its own sake. There was also a tendency to offer unsupported comment when making assessments or giving reasons. This resulted in the responses becoming too assertive rather than offering convincing argument.

The questions offer the opportunity to show higher level thinking skills and the command words directly require this. 'Assess' involves weighing and judging rather than describing or explaining. For example, in **Question 2** the debate is not whether Stalin did nor did not successfully introduce 'socialism in one country', but the extent to which this was achieved. Stronger responses were able to weigh successes and failures of Stalin's policies rather than simply offering an unbalanced demonstration of either success or failure. If a question uses the command word 'discuss' this is a sign that different views exist, and a judgement is required. 'Evaluate', too, is a command which requires a judgement not simply a series of explanations or a presentation of factual material. Where candidates took the opportunities to display these skills, responses were often impressive and there were some nuanced and developed judgements.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: European history in the interwar years, 1919–41

1 Evaluate the reasons why Mussolini was appointed Prime Minister in 1922.

Stronger responses recognised the significance of the wording of the question that Mussolini was 'appointed' rather than elected. Most answers offered some reasons for Mussolini being in power

including the relative importance of the appeal of fascism and of Mussolini's personally and the context of the problems Italy faced in the post-war period. Some weaker responses drifted into an account of the regime after 1922. There were some helpful explanations which focused on the fear of Communism and the disappointments that the war had not resulted in more gains. Answers could have been further improved with greater knowledge of the methods and ideas of the fascist movement and the weaknesses of post-war governments and specific political leaders.

2 Assess the extent to which Stalin was successful in 'building socialism in one country'.

The question was not just about the success of Stalin's policies generally but referred to a key concept, namely 'socialism in one country'. There were some perceptive answers and quite a range of views. Some saw the distinction between the move away from ideas of world revolution and the promotion of 'socialism' and defined the term well enough for a meaningful discussion to be sustained. There were analyses of how far a regime built on personal authority and repression could be seen as 'socialism' and how far Stalin overall had moved away from Trotsky's internationalism given the interventions of the pre-war years in world affairs and the post war expansionism. Less successful responses relied too heavily on accounts of economic policy which were not well linked to the question.

3 'Propaganda was the main reason for the growth of support for Nazism.' Discuss this view in relation to the period 1929–33.

There was not always a focus on 'growth of support' or on the period in the question and some responses were more focused on how the Nazis stayed in power and enforced control. Few ignored propaganda entirely but the material on this key element was sometimes limited. There were some attempts to weigh propaganda against other elements such as the policies and appeal of Nazism and the problems which Germans faced in this period which made them susceptible to propaganda. The material used was often more linked to Nazism in power not to the propaganda used in the attempt to gain electoral support.

4 Analyse the reasons for the formation of a National Government in Britain in 1931.

There were too few responses for meaningful comment.

Section B: The USA, 1944–92

5 Assess the impact of the growth of consumerism on the US economy in the later 1940s and 1950s.

This was a popular question but not all responses focused either on the impact of consumerism or on the US economy. Some responses explained the growth of consumerism rather than looking at its effects and some looked at more social impacts. Some responses dealt with various aspects of the post-war economy and found it difficult to link these meaningfully to the growth of consumerism. However, there were some stronger responses which outlined some of the economic impacts and some answers offered a persuasive analysis which put the development into a wider context arguing that it prevented a post-war slump as industries turned back to peace time production. Many answers would have benefited from more supporting information about the economic impact and more developed explanation of how consumerism impacted other developments.

6 'The Black Power movement achieved little for African Americans in the 1960s and 1970s.' Evaluate this claim.

Stronger answers balanced the positive and negative effects of the Black Power movement and drew a distinction between the type of achievements which had been a result of peaceful protest and the achievements in cultural pride and awareness that a more radical movement brought about. However, the bulk of answers equated Black Power with Civil Rights in general and did not respond to the dates in the question, some preferring lengthy accounts of incidents in the 1950s. Where Black Power as a term was understood there was often limited knowledge of its nature and development.

7 'Reaganomics did more harm than good to the US economy.' Discuss this view.

This was generally a well answered question with many candidates including judgement and developing a balanced argument. Discussions about Reagan's economic policies were often balanced with both 'harm' and 'good' being addressed. There were some well-focused analyses and some perceptive judgements, but many responses would have been stronger if there had been more factual support for the points being made. Some responses could also have been improved if explanations had been more explicit, for

example as to why the 'trickle down' effect was not achieved and why deregulation caused problems. However, the question was generally addressed directly and a narrative approach avoided.

8 Assess the extent to which the US policy of rebuilding the economies of Japan and Western Europe was motivated primarily by ideology.

Many candidates recognised that the US policies could be explained both by ideology – a desire to restrict the growth of communism – or purely economic motives. Some argued that the promotion of capitalism was both an economic and an ideological policy. The debate about the economic aid was generally grasped but some responses were over reliant on very generalised accounts of the differences between communism and capitalism and did not engage enough with the actual policy. Weaker responses provided general information about the Cold War without focusing on the demands of the question enough. Few responses failed to consider either Japan or Western Europe but there was often either an imbalance or a tendency to treat the policies generally rather than with specific reference to the two areas of US interest.

Section C: International history, 1945–92

There were insufficient responses to **Questions 9 to 12** for any comment on performance.

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Key points

- Effective answers responded directly to the specific demands of the questions rather than writing in more general terms about a topic.
- It is important that knowledge is used to support explanations and judgements rather than making comments that are simple generalisation or assertion.
- To fully respond to command words within the questions such as ‘assess’, ‘evaluate’ and ‘discuss’ candidates need to demonstrate their ability to deploy higher level skills such as supported judgement and evaluation.

General comments

The strongest responses were thoughtful, well-informed and addressed the questions directly. Such responses also included sustained analysis and informed judgement. More modest answers showed knowledge but did not direct it effectively at the question. Equally, some answers showed some understanding of issues but did not have enough knowledge to develop explanations and arguments. The weakest responses included very limited knowledge and understanding.

With regards to the key points above, it is important that the questions should be read with care to ensure that the material chosen is being used to answer the questions directly. For example, if a question asks for consideration of economic effects, such as **Question 5**, then these should be the focus of the answer throughout. It is also important to look at any key words in the question. For example, **Question 10** was focused on the outbreak of the Korean War. Material outside that ran the risk of being irrelevant and leading to writing about the topic rather than the question.

Wherever possible, responses should support explanations and judgements with factual content. In some responses there was a tendency to separate knowledge and analysis and to include information for its own sake. There was also a tendency to offer unsupported comment when making assessments or giving reasons. This resulted in the responses becoming too assertive rather than offering convincing argument.

The questions offer the opportunity to show higher level thinking skills and the command words directly require this. ‘Assess’ involves weighing and judging rather than describing or explaining. For example, in **Question 2** the requirement was to judge the relative importance of different reasons for Stalin’s introduction of the first Five Year Plan and not merely to give or explain a number of reasons. If a question uses the command word ‘discuss’ this is a sign that different views exist, and a judgement is required. ‘Evaluate’, too, is a command which requires a judgement not simply a series of explanations or a presentation of factual material. The same is true of ‘Analyse’ as in **Question 7** which is not the same as ‘list’ or ‘offer’. Where candidates took the opportunities to display these skills, responses were often impressive and there were some nuanced and developed judgements.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: European history in the interwar years, 1919–41

1 ‘Mussolini’s agricultural policy was his greatest economic success.’ Discuss this view.

Many candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of the agricultural policies and most included discussion of other economic successes such as the revaluation of the lira. There was some discussion of the value of some of the agricultural policies, but candidates were often less successful in their

attempts to provide a judgement on whether other policies had more or less success. Some responses related 'success' to the actual aims of policy which gave some means of assessing the policies. Industrial policy is an area of knowledge which could be developed, but most candidates were able to address the key element in the question.

2 Assess the reasons for the introduction of Stalin's first five-year plan in 1928.

The question was specific about the focus of 'reasons' but some candidates provided an account of the plans in the whole period 1928–41 and considered results as well as motives. However, there were some perceptive discussions which weighted the practical issues of defence and disparity between industry and agriculture with issues of ideology – the need to create the proletariat in whose name the Bolsheviks had seized power – and political power and control. When the correct focus was established, there were some strong responses which were aware of the debates of the 1920s and the problems facing Stalin and the party by 1928. Stronger responses went on to weigh the relative importance of different reasons and there were some valid and supported judgements.

3 Assess the extent to which Hitler's economic priority was rearmament in the period 1933–39.

Stronger responses maintained a focus on 'economic priority' and contrasted the economic measures taken to support rearmament with those which aimed at other objectives such as reducing unemployment. Weaker responses provided a general account of aspects of foreign policy and some general surveys of different elements of economic policy but did not respond to the demands of the question or attempt to offer a view. Support was somewhat variable and surprisingly the Four-Year Plan which was the most obviously targeted policy was not always considered or passed over with a mere reference. Dr Schacht was wrongly credited with various policies but not often with the so-called New Plan and his role might be an area of knowledge which could be further developed.

4 'British public opinion towards war was dominated by pacifism in the period 1934–39.' Assess this view.

There were too few responses for meaningful comment.

Section B: The USA, 1944–92

5 Evaluate the effectiveness of the economic policies of the US federal government in the late 1940s and 1950s.

In weaker responses there was a tendency to offer general description of economic developments. Where economic policy was considered it tended to be focused on the 1940s and the support provided for returning GIs, but relatively little knowledge of the 1950s was demonstrated beyond some infrastructure projects. There was some analysis of effectiveness in more modest responses, but in general these tended to lack specific support and the range of policies considered could have been wider.

6 Assess the reasons for the rise of the 'imperial presidency' in the 1960s and 1970s.

There were relatively few answers to this question and the term 'imperial presidency' was generally not well defined or understood. Answers tended to describe aspects of political history, particularly the Nixon presidency.

7 Analyse the reasons for Clinton's election victory in 1992.

Again, there were relatively few answers to this question. Most candidates maintained a focus on the question and reasons for Clinton's election victory were offered, but some responses did not go beyond Clinton's personal appeal. The overall context of the situation by 1992 was not generally dealt with in much depth. Strong responses understood the demands of the command 'analyse' by making a higher-level judgement rather than a series of explanations. These responses did weigh the appeal of Clinton with the perceived Republican failings and reached a supported judgement.

8 Evaluate the reasons for the US involvement in Korea 1950–53.

Most responses addressed general US policy towards containment and there was often a lot of material on the situation in Europe to the detriment of consideration of what was at stake in Korea and how the situation developed after the initial defence of the South and the decision to press on into North Korea.

There were some responses which did offer an evaluation of the different reasons for US involvement from ideology to economic and strategic self-interest but more awareness of the development of the war would have improved many of the responses seen.

Section C: International history, 1945–92

9 Assess how far the nuclear arms race was responsible for the Cold War tension between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Responses often showed considerable knowledge about Cold War tensions but there was often considerable description of some elements, particularly the Cuban Missile Crisis. It is important that knowledge is used in support of arguments and explanations rather than imparted for its own sake. Most responses did address the arms race but there was often less knowledge about the period between the use of the Atomic bombs and the Missile Crisis. There were also accounts of the arms limitations talks which were sometimes not linked to the question. More searching responses tried to weigh the relative importance of the arms race, but some were content to say that it was not the only cause of tension and to explain a variety of other conflicts. There were some effective arguments about relative importance which explained that there were efforts to reduce tension about arms but ideological factors were harder to reconcile.

10 ‘Stalin was responsible for the outbreak of the Korean War.’ Evaluate this view.

There were some very strong answers to this question which showed detailed knowledge of Stalin’s involvement in the actual outbreak of the Korean War and compared his responsibility with that of other participants. Weaker responses made general comments about Stalin’s attitude to the West with limited reference to the outbreak of the war or general accounts of the origin of the war with limited reference to Stalin were obviously less focused on the demands of the question.

11 ‘The Gold Coast achieved independence because of Nkrumah’s leadership.’ Discuss this view.

There were some well explained reasons for independence which concerned Britain, the role of the US and the general context, but few answers offered an analysis of the role of Nkrumah. There were exceptions but in general the key issue in the question received either a cursory or a descriptive treatment. There were attempts to assess his role, but many responses gave lists of factors rather than a developed evaluation. Some of the contextual knowledge and understanding was strong but Nkrumah’s actual role was not always sufficiently considered.

12 Assess how far the Camp David agreements of 1978 can be considered a success.

There were some thoughtful answers which engaged with the concept of ‘success’ and considered for whom and on what basis the agreements were successful, drawing a distinction between the short and long-term consequences. Weaker responses often expressed views about the current situation with limited or no reference to the agreements.

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There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.