

History

Answers and commentaries

GCSE (8145)

1BA Conflict and tension: The First World War, 1894 - 1918

Marked answers from students for questions from the June 2022 exams. Supporting commentary is provided to help you understand how marks are awarded and how students can improve performance.

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Answers and commentaries

Please note that these responses have been reproduced exactly as they were written by the student.

This resources is to be used alongside the GCSE History 1BA Conflict and tension: The First World War, 1894 - 1918 June 2022 Question paper and inserts.

Question 1

Source A is critical of Kaiser Wilhelm. How do you know?

Explain your answer using **Source A** and your contextual knowledge.

[4 marks]

Mark scheme

Target **Analyse sources contemporary to the period (AO3a)**

Level 2: **Developed analysis of source based on content and/or provenance** **3–4**

Students may progress from a simple analysis of the source with extended reasoning supported by factual knowledge and understanding related to the features of the source.

For example, the title of the cartoon suggests that the Kaiser was just dreaming to think he could dominate the world. The image refers to his ambitious foreign policy of 'Weltpolitik' to make Germany a global power by taking over other countries. The cartoon shows the French view that, in reality, the Kaiser will be defeated.

Level 1: **Simple analysis of source based on content and/or provenance** **1–2**

Students identify relevant features in the source and support them with simple factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, the cartoon shows the Kaiser wanted to take over the world. The cartoon was produced in France so it is bound to be critical of the enemy during the First World War.

Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question **0**

Student responses

Response A

Source A is critical of the Kaiser. Evidence to prove this is it shows the “reality” and that he is being crushed by the earth. From my own knowledge I know that the Kaiser used ‘a place in the sun’ which meant having the largest empire meaning he said conquer the world. However Britain’s empire was superior.

This is a Level 1 response

A simple response that identifies some valid context (the reference to ‘a place in the sun’) though this is not directly linked to the source. As such, the response remains in Level 1.

Response B

Source A is critical of Germany as it is showing how they are very greedy. I can see this as in the source the Kaiser can not quite get his hands around the world, this is representing how his Weltpolitik dream of world control is unrealistic and too ambitious so he will fall down and the world which represents the Triple Entente will crush his. It also states in the provenance ‘ French postcard’. As France were at war with Germany, they would be critical of Germany to spread anti-German propaganda.

This is a Level 2 response

The response shows developed analysis of both the content (development in Weltpolitik) and provenance (anti-German propaganda). It is worth noting that the mark scheme only requires developed analysis of content and/or provenance. Nonetheless, it is credited at Level 2, at the higher mark in the level.

Question 2

How useful are **Source B** and **C** to an historian studying the end of the First World War?

Explain your answer using **Sources B** and **C** and your contextual knowledge.

[12 marks]

Mark scheme

Target **Analyse sources contemporary to the period (AO3a)**
Evaluate sources and make substantiated judgements (AO3b)

In analysing and evaluating sources, students will draw on their contextual knowledge to question critically the content and provenance of sources (for example, the context of the time in which source was created, place, author's situation, knowledge, beliefs, circumstances, access to information, purpose and audience).

Level 4: **Complex evaluation of both sources with sustained judgement based on content and provenance** **10–12**

Students may progress from a developed evaluation of the sources by complex reasoning related to utility on the basis of content and provenance. They may evaluate the relationship between the sources based on analysis of provenance and contextual knowledge.

For example, taken together the sources are useful because they show how leadership and American resources came together to defeat Germany and bring an end to the First World War. Furthermore, the sources show the role of government propaganda in managing public support was essential during the final years of the war.

Level 3: **Developed evaluation of sources based on the content and/or provenance** **7-9**

Students may progress from a simple evaluation of the sources with extended reasoning related to utility on the basis of content and/or provenance.

For example, Source B is useful because it shows the impact of America's entry into the First World War. This was a huge material and morale boost to the Allied war effort and compensated for the withdrawal of Russia and the collapse of the Eastern Front. Once the Allies had the support of American troops and equipment, they were able to break the stalemate on the Western Front and defeat Germany which brought an end to the war. The poster encourages the French public to believe that Germany can now be defeated after three years of fighting. Source C shows that the Prime Minister of Great Britain wants the country to understand why the British army will be commanded by a French general.

For example, Source C is useful to understand how significant it was that the Allies adopted a unified command structure in 1918. Lloyd George is trying to protect morale by putting a positive spin on the decision. He is reassuring the British people that this means the war will be won. The Allies had to find a way to stop the very successful German offensive of March 1918. Source B shows that the Americans provided extra resources to the Allies in 1917. This helped the Allies to overcome Germany on the Western Front and brought an end to the war.

Level 2: Simple evaluation of source(s) based on content and/or provenance 4–6

Students may progress from a basic analysis of the source(s) to simple evaluation of the content and/or provenance.

For example, Source B shows that the American soldiers arrived in France in 1917. This made the Allies more powerful than the Germans and so it was easier to defeat them. Source C shows that the Prime Minister of Great Britain wants the country to understand why the British army will be commanded by Foch who was a French general. He says it will improve help them win battles.

Level 1: Basic analysis of sources(s) 1–3

Answers may show understanding/support for one or both sources, but the case is made by assertion/basic inference.

Students identify basic features which are valid about the sources and related to the enquiry point, for example, Source B shows that the American soldier is stronger than the German soldier. Source C says that the separate armies of the Allies should join together to fight.

Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question 0

Student responses

Response A

The message of source B is that the end of the First World War was caused by America's entry into the war. Evidence from B to show this is the giant shadow figure representing America, threatening a smaller man outside of the Western Front depicting Germany. From my contextual knowledge, I know that in April 1917 America declared war on Germany but the American troops would not arrive up on the Western front until early 1918. This caused Germany to quickly try to capture and win the war through the 1918 spring offensive before American troops could arrive, before ending the war with the Armistice on 11th November 1918. The provenance of B is a French post produced in 1917. The provenance of B makes it more useful because it is likely to be critical of Germany and due to American entry into the war.

However, the message of source C is that the allies on the Western Front were weakened. Evidence from C to suggest this is 'The allies are weakened because we are fighting as separate armies on the Western Front' and 'it is inefficient to have different plans'. From my contextual knowledge I know that in 1918 the Germans fought the Spring Offensive on the Western Front as a final effort to win the war after Russia had left the war, leaving the allies, Britain, France, America to focus their efforts on the Western front in order to knock Germany out of the war. The provenance of C is a statement made by Britain's Prime minister Lloyd George in April 1918. This makes the source more useful because it is likely to also be critical of Germany, however due to it being created in 1918, after the start of Spring Offensive it is likely to be more true and accurate as a formal, factual telling of events.

Therefore, I believe that both sources are useful as B depicts beliefs about America's entry into the war before the spring offensive, while C depicts the reality in 1918.

This is a Level 3 response

The response addresses both sources. It addresses the content and provenance of both. There is developed evaluation of the content of Source B's (reference to Spring offensive as response to US strength). Provenance is also addressed, but in a simple manner. The treatment of Source C is less effective, with simple inferences made for both content and provenance. The response is therefore credited at Level 3, at a lower mark in the level.

Response B

Source B and C are both incredibly useful for historians studying the first world war. In source B, we are told that it is a poster; available for the eyes of the French public. The poster titles 'here come the Americans', which in the time the poster was produced (1917) the Americans did in fact declare war. The primary objective of the poster is/was to lift the French moral, which we know did happen as allied forces gained support from the home front, as victory seemed more promising with the arrival of another global power and 2 million, fresh troops. We also see that the 'small figure' is backed into a corner (the western front). This is useful when referring to the Ludendorff spring offensive, and the 100 days (Hindenburg line). Allies had Germany pinned after their attempt of an attack and it was only a matter of time before they were defeated.

The Americans are also presented as a much bigger intimidating figure which is useful given the knowledge the USA were one of the strongest countries on the planet at the time. The arrival of America was a huge moral boost to the home-front; as presented in the poster in France, 1917, the year of declaration of war on the Germans from the Americans.

Source C is useful given how it adapted from the British Prime minister in 1918. The source states that the government is convinced that 'a unified command will be vital in the coming battles'. We know this is true as in the Ludendorff spring offensive when Foch was put in charge of both militaries the counter attack put in place after the German advance at the Hindenburg line and the western front led to the Germans coming to terms with their inevitable defeat. The source also proves that they need the support of the public in order to boost moral, "I ask the British public for support." For these reasons both sources are useful.

This is a Level 4 response

The response addresses both sources, and addresses the content and provenance of both. The provenance of Source B is developed through the explanation of the source's purpose, while context is used to develop an evaluation of the content of the source. The treatment of Source C is not as strong, as the provenance is only briefly referenced, though there is evaluation of the content by reference to Foch's tactics. As the source shows developed thinking of content and provenance it is credited at Level 4, at the mid-point in the level.

Question 3

Write and account of how the Alliance System contributed to the spread of conflict in 1914

[8 marks]

Mark scheme

Target Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order concepts (AO2:4)
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied (AO1:4)

Level 4: **Complex analysis of causation/consequence** **7-8**
Answer is presented in a coherent narrative/account that demonstrates a range of accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Extends Level 3.

Students may progress from a developed narrative of causation/consequence with complex sequencing and reasoning supported by a range of accurate and detailed factual knowledge and understanding which might be related, for example, to an analysis of how/why tension increased at different stages and/or showing understanding about how much each part of the sequence increased tension and led to a crisis.

For example, the contribution of the Alliance System to the spread of conflict in 1914 can be traced back to the range of alliances that began in the previous century. The combined effect was that Germany was completely encircled by potential enemies. The Kaiser made plans to ensure that his country was ready to fight on two fronts if needed. When the Serbian crisis developed in July 1914, Germany was able to enact its war plan against Russia and France.

Student responses

Response A

One way in which the Alliance System contributed to the spread of conflict in 1914, was that the Triple Entente threatened Germany and made them feel encircled. The Triple Entente continued to embarrass Germany and single them out on many occasions. One example of this is the first Moroccan crisis. Germany was left feeling angry and determined when the Algerians conference led to France getting control over Morocco instead of Germany. This was not the only time the Triple Entente caused conflict between them and Germany, as they often surrounded Germany threatening the Kaiser and fueling him to go to war.

Another way in which the Alliance System contributed to the spread of conflict in the 1914 was when the Entente Cordiale (Britain and France) signed a naval agreement leaving Germany feeling very vulnerable. Also, the Triple Alliance created conflict and Tension when they put their efforts together to help Austria – Hungary annex Serbia. This led to the creation of The Black Hand and the Assassination of Franz Ferdinand which is probably the most direct cause of the war and conflict in 1914.

This is a Level 2 response

The response analyses two reasons why the Alliance System contributed to the spread of conflict in 1914. The analysis is simple, as the focus of the question 'spread of conflict in 1914' is only implicitly addressed. As a result, the response is credited at Level 2, at the higher mark in the level.

Response B

Firstly, some would say that the Alliance was the main reason for the spread of conflict. They would say this because the Triple Alliance and Triple Entente were triggered during the July crisis dragging both France and Russia into war with Germany and Austria-Hungary and then also later Great Britain due to the treaty of London against Austria-Hungary and Germany this lead to a conflict between Serbia and Austria-Hungary into a world war. Germany backing up Austria-Hungary with the blank cheque and Russia backing Serbia due to Russia's self appointed position as the Slavic mother country, and then France entering due its alliance with Russia.

On the other hand, some would disagree. They would say that Serbia's overconfidence was the main reason for the spread of conflict in 1914. They would say this because following the Balkan Wars in 1911 Serbia doubled in size after defeating a major world power in the Ottoman Empire and also Bulgaria. Serbian nationalism following this was at high and the idea of a recreated greater Serbia grew, thus the establishment of the Black hand and the assassination of Franz Ferdinand over Bosnia, starting the spark that triggered the First World War.

This is a Level 3 response

The response shows developed analysis of how the Alliance System led to the July Crisis and the spread of conflict in 1914. Subsequent paragraphs address other longer term causes of war, but are not made explicitly relevant to the question. The response is therefore credited at Level 3.

Response C

The alliance system caused multiple countries to join a small conflict unnecessarily. This is due to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand which triggered alliance systems, Serbia failed the 10 point ultimatum so Austria-Hungary tried to take over it. However, Russia was allies with Serbia and promised not to back down after Russia's previous embarrassment during conflict. Then, Germany promised to defend Austria-Hungary which triggered the triple alliance: Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy. Also triggered the triple entente: France, Russia, Britain.

The alliance system had countries on different sides of Europe which spread conflict. We see this though the Schlieffen plan when Germany try to get to Paris by marching through Belgium to avoid war on two fronts. By marching through Belgium, Germany created was with Belgium and Britain because Germany broke the treaty of London which meant Belgium had to be respected as neutral. The alliance systems slowly triggered the involvement of other countries in Europe as many countries were involuntarily involved due to the fact they're geographically placed next to the countries in conflict, making the advancement of conflict inevitable.

This is a Level 4 response

The response addresses more than one way in which the Alliance system led to the spread of conflict in 1914. It initially explores how the assassination of Franz Ferdinand 'triggered' the alliance system which led to war. In the 2nd paragraph, it analyses how the invasion of Belgium escalated conflict through the treaty of London. As such, it is credited at Level 4.

Question 4

'The leadership of the generals was the main reason for continued stalemate on the Western Front until the end of 1917.'

How far do you agree with this statement?

Explain your answer.

[16 marks]
[SPaG 4 marks]

Mark scheme

Target Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order concepts (AO2:8)
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied (AO1:8)

Level 4: Complex explanation of stated factor and other factor(s) leading to a sustained judgement 13–16
Answer demonstrates a range of accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Answer demonstrates a complex, sustained line of reasoning which has a sharply-focused coherence and logical structure that is fully substantiated, with well-judged relevance.

Extends Level 3.

Students may progress from a developed explanation of causation by complex explanation of the relationship between causes supported by detailed factual knowledge and understanding to form a sustained judgement.

For example, the main reason for continued stalemate on the Western Front was that both sides had the technology to defend their front line but lacked the technology to break through the enemies' trenches. In the early years of the war the Generals did not understand the technology and so failed to use it effectively and stuck to old tactics.

Level 3: Developed explanation of the stated factor and other factor(s) 9-12
Answer demonstrates a range of accurate knowledge and understanding
that is relevant to the question

Answer demonstrates a developed, sustained line of reasoning which has coherence and logical structure; it is well substantiated, and with sustained, explicit relevance.

Extends Level 2.

Answer may suggest that one reason has greater merit.

Students may progress from a simple explanation of causation with developed reasoning supported by factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, the Generals' leadership failed to achieve a breakthrough in key battles such as the Somme and Passchendaele and this was the main reason for the continued stalemate until 1917. However, despite the use of new tactics such as the 'creeping barrage', the enemy lines were not decisively broken and the war continued. The Generals continued to send men over the top in a war of attrition. Haig was nicknamed the 'Butcher of the Somme'.

For example, the use of heavy artillery was a reason why the stalemate continued on the Western Front until 1917. Large guns were used to fire shells at the enemy trenches prior to an assault. The objective was to make holes in the barbed wire so that attackers could run through. However, the shellfire just made the wire more tangled and slowed the attackers down which made a breakthrough less likely.

Level 2: Simple explanation of stated factor or other factor(s) 5-8
Answer demonstrates specific knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Answer demonstrates a simple, sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, structured, substantiated and explicitly relevant.

Answers arguing a preference for one judgement but with only basic explanation of another view will be marked at this level.

Students may progress from a basic explanation of causation by simple reasoning and supporting it with factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, stalemate was caused by the race to the sea in 1914. At the start of the war both sides had tried to get around the enemy trenches by heading north towards the sea. The armies dug trenches as they advanced towards the English Channel and these became the front lines that remained in place throughout the war. Neither side could move forwards.

Level 1: Basic explanation of one or more factors 1-4
Answer demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Answer demonstrates a basic line of reasoning, which is coherent, structured with some substantiation; the relevance might be implicit.

Students recognise and provide a basic explanation of one or more factors.

Students may offer a basic explanation of the stated factor, such as the Generals did not change their plans. Men were sent over the top to the enemy trenches.

Students may offer basic explanations of other factor(s), for example, machine guns made it easy to defend a trench.

Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question 0

Spelling, punctuation and grammar

	Performance descriptor	Marks awarded
High performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall • Learners use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate 	4 marks
Intermediate performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall • Learners use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate 	2–3 marks
Threshold performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall • Learners use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate 	1 mark
No marks awarded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learner writes nothing • The learner’s response does not relate to the question • The learner’s achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning 	0 marks

Student responses

Response A

Some may argue that the leadership of the generals was the main reason for continuous stalemate on the Western front until the end of 1917. They might argue this because Winston Churchill for example used to be in charge of the Navy and put together the Gallipoli campaign. The plan had been to make the Third front and help supply Russia by sailing through the Dardanelles strait to the Black sea. They would do this by landing troops on Hellas beach take over the forts, clear the sea mines and continue through. However , Churchill underestimated the Turkish when he thought it to be an easy victory. The Turkish forces had the high ground and were too strong which led to the British digging trenches for cover. As a result, this caused stalemate even though the plan was and again executed on sulva beach with the same outcome, reflecting badly on the leadership of Winston Churchill. This ultimately left him humiliated when the campaign was called off and his resigned from his roles as no progress came of it, only causing more casualties.

On the other hand others may argue that the main reason for continued stalemate were military tactics. They might argue this because in many battles such as the Somme bombardment was used for 48 hours to weaken the enemy defence line and then was followed by an infantry charge. However, heavy artillery could launch a 900lb shell over 5km but they weren't very accurate and would often miss the enemy trenches landing before or after them. This had negative effects on the infantry change because the bombardment often left barbed wire crumpled in heaps with small gaps in between. With the British soldiers weighed down by their equipment and belonging they took with them once they had taken over the enemy trench, it weighed them down making them extremely slow. This was a problem because they became bottlenecked at the barbed wire which allowed enemy machine guns to slaughter them as they could fire 400 round per minute. This led to minimal progress and very rarely a war of movement as no land was gained.

Overall, I would largely agree with the statement because the generals come up with the military tactics and continued to use them even after failure with no advantage made and hundreds of thousands of lives taken because of it which reflects badly on their leadership.

This is a Level 2 response

The response addresses the given reason. The initial section (Gallipoli) is not directly relevant to the question, but the impact of tactics/ leadership is explained. A summative judgement is attempted. The response remains at Level 2 as only one reason is addressed. It is credited at a mid-point in the level.

Response B

Some may argue that the leadership of the generals was the main reason for continued stalemate. They could argue this as there was battles such as the battle of the Somme, 1916, that had poor planning and resulted in heavy losses. One reason this could be argued is due to the planning of Douglas Haig who was called the 'Butcher of the Somme'. His plan was to launch a huge attack that would end the war. However his ineffective plan did not carry out the way he expected and resulted in one of the deadliest battles in the war. Within just the first day there was 57,000 casualties and approximately 20,000 deaths. The plan proved to be a loss and resulted in neither side making any progress.

Others may argue that other battles were the main reason, such as the Schlieffen plan that were the main reason for continued stalemate. The plan was first devised in 1905 by Alfred von Schlieffen who had underestimated how long Germany would take to mobilise, also underestimating Russia's early mobilisation. Germany attempted to march through Belgium into France in 6 days, just it took 6 weeks. Furthermore the treaty of London (1839) meant the British Expeditionary Force would arrive in Belgium. Once they had reached France, Russia mobilised early, only taking 10 days but were expected to take 2 weeks. This resulted in fighting a war on two fronts with neither side having made any progress and ultimately led to stalemate.

Overall, I would agree that the poor planning of leadership was the main contribution as although the Schlieffen plan had a large impact on causing stalemate that was also partially due to the poor leadership of Alfred von Schlieffen.

This is a Level 3 response

The response addresses the given reason and one other reason. It shows developed explanation for both, with the section on the Schlieffen Plan and stalemate the stronger of the two. A judgement is attempted in the final lines, though it is asserted. As a result, the response is credited at Level 3, at a mid point in the level.

Response C

Some may agree with this statement because due to the bad tactics produced by the Generals and the lack of leadership and other factor there was a stalemate on the Western front. An example of this bad leadership is at the battle of the Somme as on the week General Haig ordered a bombardment of the German trenches. Over 3 million shells were fired and on the day of the Somme he believed that all the Germans had died as a result, but when he ordered the attack to begin he found that very little had been done to the German fortifications and over 60,000 casualties were reported. However, Haig did not adapt the plan or stop it, he kept sending troops out and they kept being gunned down. By the end, over 600,000 casualties had been reported by the British and the only were able to advance 6 miles. Due to Haig's bad leadership he had lost a large amount of men and gained very little and not captured, meaning that the stalemate continued until 1917.

Others might argue that the failure of the Schlieffen plan led to a stalemate up to the end of 1917. This is because when Germany attacked into Belgium, they would be able to get past the French defences, and they did not expect the Belgians to fight back. Due to this opposition, the German advance was delayed, and Russia had mobilised in 10 days which Germany did not expect either so that had to move troops from the plan to defend from the Russians. Due to this, the Germans did not have enough troops to encircle France like they planned. They had to dig trenches and so did Britain and soon the trenches would span over 100 miles long and the war turned in to a war of attrition. If the Schlieffen plan had not failed then Germany would have taken France and trench warfare would not have been introduced, which would have avoided stalemate.

Overall, leadership of the Generals was the main reason for the stalemate. Even though the Schlieffen Plan was important, it failed because the German Generals got it wrong that Belgium wouldn't resist and underestimated how long it would take the Russians to mobilise. This miscalculation led to the development of the trench warfare, which was another decision made by the Generals that led to the stalemate.

This is a Level 4 response

The response addresses the given reason and one other reason. It uses good contextual knowledge and understanding to support explanations of how leadership and the failure of the Schlieffen Plan led to stalemate. In the final paragraph, reasoning and relational thinking is provided to support a substantiated judgement that poor leadership was the more important reason. This is complex, meaning that the response is credited at Level 4, at a mid mark in the level.

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