

A-LEVEL HISTORY

A-level (7042)

Marked Papers

Paper 1K - The making of a
superpower: USA, 1865-1975

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sample assessment papers.

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EXAMPLE RESPONSES



Example responses plus commentaries

The following student responses are intended to illustrate approaches to assessment. These responses have not been completed under timed examination conditions. They are not intended to be viewed as 'model' answers and the marking has not been subject to the usual standardisation process.

Specimen Paper 1K, The making of a superpower: USA, 1865-1975

Question 01

With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context assess how convincing the arguments in these three extracts are in relation to US isolationism between the wars.

[30 marks]

Mark scheme

- L5:** Shows a very good understanding of the interpretations put forward in all three extracts and combines this with a strong awareness of the historical context to analyse and evaluate the interpretations given in the extracts. Evaluation of the arguments will be well-supported and convincing. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. **25-30**
- L4:** Shows a good understanding of the interpretations given in all three extracts and combines this with knowledge of the historical context to analyse and evaluate the interpretations given in the extracts. The evaluation of the arguments will be mostly well-supported, and convincing, but may have minor limitations of depth and breadth. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. **19-24**
- L3:** Provides some supported comment on the interpretations given in all three extracts and comments on the strength of these arguments in relation to their historic context. There is some analysis and evaluation but there may be an imbalance in the degree and depth of comments offered on the strength of the arguments. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. **13-18**
- L2:** Provides some accurate comment on the interpretations given in at least two of the extracts, with reference to the historical context. The answer may contain some analysis, but there is little, if any, evaluation. Some of the comments on the strength of the arguments may contain some generalisation, inaccuracy or irrelevance. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. **7-12**
- L1:** **Either** shows an accurate understanding of the interpretation given in one extract only **or** addresses two/three extracts, but in a generalist way, showing limited accurate understanding of the arguments they contain, although there may be some general awareness of the historical context. Any comments on the strength of the arguments are likely to be generalist and contain some inaccuracy and/or irrelevance. The response demonstrates limited understanding of context. **1-6**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Student one

Response

Extract A is convincing in the sense that it states that Roosevelt believed “diplomacy had to be tailored to the public mood”. For instance, when more than half the public disapproved of America going into war, FDR delivered a speech in which he assured the public that your “boys were not going to be sent into any foreign wars”. But for FDR himself personally wished to get America involved in the war, he gave cunning fireside chats – which once kept America’s morale high during the Depression – which are famously known as the ‘gardenhose’ and the ‘Quarantine’ speech. Extract A’s reasons for FDR’s reasons for leading America to War is further convincing. Because while the Gardenhose speech shows America’s “moral duty” to use its “influence” to keep the “world peace”, the Quarantine speech shows how FDR thought that America should enter the War for its “self-interest” in order to “[put] the aggressors in ‘quarantine’”. Through such speeches Roosevelt succeeded to convince the public of America’s need to help the Allies defeat the totalitarian regimes of Germany, Italy, and Japan. Convinced by FDR, only 6% of the public later believed that America was doing ‘too much’ to help Britain and her Allies. This suggests FDR successfully manipulated the public opinion to justify his foreign policies. Thus Extract A is true in the sense that it accurately reflects FDR’s belief that “diplomacy must be tailored to public mood” and that it shows FDR’s reasons for wanting to get America involved in WW2. But Extract A is not so convincing when it states that the Neutrality Act of 1935 which “was designed to prevent the economic entanglements of trade and loans that had helped drag America into the Great War” represents FDR’s reluctance towards war which is shown by the quote “I have seen war, I hate war”. This seems to be a flaw in A’s interpretation because the Neutrality Act of 1935 developed into the one-sided cash-and-carry act to help Britain. Furthermore, given that it was Roosevelt himself who convinced the Congress to pass the cash-and-carry act, it rather seems that FDR’s quote “I have seen war, I hate war” did not reflect his true beliefs but was rather his tactic to play alongside the public’s isolationist tendencies.

Extract B is convincing in the sense that it states that “isolationists had some justification for seeing [FDR] as an instinctive internationalist” who sought “opportunities abroad to disguise his domestic failures”. For instance, like the extract suggests, FDR was well aware of the demand-boosting advantages of the war which would stimulate “business confidence”. In fact, in the 1940 Presidential election, Roosevelt appealed to the businessmen who saw the advantages of America entering the war. Thus it is more or less likely that Roosevelt was well aware of the economic advantages that US entry to the WW2 would bring which would make up for the limitations of his New Deal Policy which still left 1/5 of the country unemployed. But it rather seems wrong to agree completely with Extract B stating that Roosevelt’s sole reason for entering the war was due to the “political advantages” at home. For instance, even Extract B itself states that FDR warned of the dangers of the fascist regimes as “early as 1934”. 1934 was only a year after FDR’s first term in office, so he surely did not have any “domestic failures” in need of “disguise” by taking America into war. Thus it seems more reasonable to say that FDR genuinely thought the US’s entry to WW2 was a defense mechanism for

America to protect itself from the growing influence of Nazi Germany, Italy, and Japan. And such principles are clearly underlined in his 'gardenhose' speech where he establishes that helping Britain was essentially serving America's own interests by stopping the fascist regimes from reaching America.

Extract C is convincing in the sense that FDR's Good Neighbor Policy sought to promote America as a "moral force". For instance, America left Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua. In 1934, the Congress further signed a treaty with Cuba to nullify the Platt Amendment. But although FDR's negotiations with Latin American may have established America as a moral force politically by pulling out of the countries, it rather increased the American influence economically. For instance, the Reciprocal Trade Agreement seemingly put the Latin American countries in an equal position as the USA. But putting the tariffs and trade barriers at the same rate meant the Latin American countries had no way of competing with the already productive American imports. Thus, in essence, the Reciprocal Trade Agreement undermines Extract C's claim that FDR's good neighbor policy stemmed out from his "very moral, democratic view of the world". However, Extract C's claim that FDR's foreign policies was a moral one seems to be more applicable to his foreign policy with Europe given that he did "condemn tyranny". For instance, FDR accused Japan of their tyrannical expansion in Indochina and in mainland China. Furthermore, he condemned the "warmongers" in his quarantine speech. However, even this has some complications. For instance, although he condemned Japan of invading Indochina, he did not condemn the Dutch and the French for withholding their colonies there. Therefore, Extract C's claim that FDR's foreign policy purely had its motivation in condemning the tyranny seems to be an overstatement.

Commentary

In the assessment of each extract, the answer identifies some of the arguments advanced and deploys contextual knowledge appropriately to corroborate the judgements made, but in the assessment of each there are also some significant misunderstandings. This is particularly the case in relation to the assessment of Extract B. The claim that 'Roosevelt used WWII as a distraction from his domestic failures' is not the author's opinion but that of opponents of FDR. The author is more sympathetic to Roosevelt than this answer suggests.

This is a good Level 3 answer. It is let down by some misunderstanding, but does attempt an assessment with some appropriate supporting information.

Student two

Response

All three extracts explore the trends of isolationism, or interventionism, of US foreign policy in the interwar years. Reynolds argues that Roosevelt was the main driving force to 'break the isolationist mold.' Whilst he emphasizes perhaps the moral nature of FDR's actions, he suggests that the severe opposition from Congress restricted his actions. Firstly, Reynolds puts forward the argument that FDR's moral reason for moving away from isolation was due to the belief that the US should 'use its influence in the course of world peace.' This view can easily be corroborated with the 1937 Quarantine Speech. By calling peace loving nations to break off relations with aggressors, FDR was publically using US influence in order to spread the moral message of peace. Further evidence of FDR's more outward looking actions was his beginning of the special relationship with Churchill. Whilst originally he was dubious of Churchill in the 1940s, FDR knew that he could not stand back while Europe destroyed itself. Whilst this may also relate to the idea of 'self-interest' in the extract due to the repercussions a European crisis would have on the US in terms of trade, it also ultimately shows the moral desire FDR had for peace as a credible aspect of Reynold's argument.

Furthermore, Reynold's advances the idea that it was due to Congressional opposition that the US retained some of their revisionist policies. As Reynold claims, 'Congress was isolationist by conviction.' This is clearly seen in the investigation by Congressman Gerald Nye that blamed the US arms industry for getting the US in the war. This shows that not only did Congress withdraw economic involvement with Europe, but that they very much regretted entering WWI due to the economic factor. Further conflicts between FDR and Congress which support Congress' preference for isolationism were that they refused to revise the Neutrality Act in 1939. Even after FDR's warnings of the rise of Hitler, Congress' refusal highlights their effort to isolate themselves from the risk of wartime trade. This corroborates the idea that there were disagreements between FDR and Congress over policies of interventionism and it was largely due to Congress that the isolationist policies remained, just as Reynold's suggests.

However, Reynold's maintains that Roosevelt tailored his foreign policy to 'public mood' in order to shift away from US isolationist policy. There are many flaws in this argument as seen in the Ludlow Amendment. FDR opposed an amendment that called for a referendum every time the US decided whether to go to war. Although he narrowly won with 209 to 188 votes, one may argue that he largely ignored the 70% of the public that were in favour of this amendment, thus showing that FDR did not wholly tailor his decisions to public opinion, as Reynold's claims. This may also be seen with the fact that even though FDR was one of the first leaders who saw interventionism as inevitable, still 95% of people in a Gallup poll did not wish to be involved in future conflict. Therefore, it is apparent that Reynold's argument considerably over-exaggerated the importance that public opinion had on FDR's actions and isolationism in the whole period.

Brendon's main interpretation of this period is that although FDR was still the driving force of interventionism, this was more to absolve himself from his domestic failures. The argument of domestic failures pushing FDR to look outwards is evident from the 1937-38 economic showdown. Dubbed the 'Roosevelt Recession', unemployment was at 19% and it was evident to FDR that this would have severely negative impact on his popularity, thus corroborating Brendon's references to 'political advantages'. FDR's desire to gain economic benefits by moving away from isolationism is evident in the 1937 'Cash and Carry' Neutrality Act. By being able to sell goods to warring countries, FDR was able to reap the economic benefits of increased trade whilst also

feigning isolationism for the public, just as Brendon emphasises, in order to remain politically popular at home. Brendon also highlights that FDR's desire to be seen as an 'internationalist' figure led to a decline in US internationalism during the interwar years. This is highly convincing as not only was FDR the first leader to recognise the Soviet Union as a legitimate and sovereign state, he also responded positively to a British suggestion that London and Washington work together in naval talks with the Japanese. This shows that instead of isolating themselves, FDR wished to show the US was talking with an active diplomatic role in foreign affairs. Thus, this emerging role truly began to solidify FDR as an internationalist, just as Brendon suggests.

Yet one may argue that Brendon overemphasises and perhaps wrongly claims that the cause of this decline of isolationism was merely due to FDR's desire to solve economic problems. This argument is not wholly convincing as it eradicates the threats from Europe that equally pushed FDR away from isolationism. Although Brendon claims that FDR saw the advantages of rearmament as a boost to 'business confidence', it may be argued that he oversimplifies FDR's emotions at the time. One can evidence the uneasiness of FDR with the fact that he actually feared that if the Allies and their empires fell then German and Italian groups would be in a position to threaten Brazil and other South American countries in their 'sphere of influence'. FDR's motives for less isolation can thus not be wholly due to economic benefits as he was also forced in to action due to defensive fears. This is further seen in the 1939 letter to Hitler asking that 31 named countries within his influence would not be attacked by him in the next 10 years. By showing that FDR moved away from isolationism in the form of diplomacy as well as economically, it thus renders Brendon's argument as unconvincing that FDR's motives were mostly economical as it can be seen that he also had a defensive motive of the US and its neighbouring lands in mind as well.

Finally, Overy contends that during the interwar years, the US returned to a very traditional foreign policy of morality and thus did not want to be embroiled in European 'entanglements'. In support of this view, Overy refers to America as a country that 'condemned tyranny', thus show-casing its morality. Whilst once again this can be endorsed in FDR's 1937 Quarantine Speech, further evidence is abundant in the late 1930s as when Japan created closer alliances with fascist dictators, Congress responded in 1940 by limiting oil supplies and banning sending machine tools to Japan. These embargoes showcase strong moral action as they refused to support the war-mongering dictators of the time, thus creating easy corroboration to Overy's argument that the US encouraged peace by condemning tyranny.

In addition, Overy further maintains this return to the traditional policies of the US isolationism showcased in their renewed focus on South America rather than Europe. This view can be easily corroborated with Overy's mention of the 'good neighbour policy'. These new moral actions in South America is seen by the fact that in 1933 US troops left Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua in order to respect their sovereignty as 'good neighbours'. This moral isolationism is further evidenced in 1934 when the Platt Amendment, that forced Cuba to wholly depend on the US economically, was nullified this showing their commitment to returning South American sovereignty. Thus Overy is credible in stating this shift back to a focus on South American and increasing positive relations between them and the US. Finally, however, Overy overemphasises this isolationism in order to exaggerate the moral and traditional aspect in US foreign policy. In contrast one can argue that US foreign policy was not wholly 'traditional' due to the new interest in Europe, which had not been prominent previously. This is clear as between 1939-44, US GDP grew from \$88.6 billion to \$135 billion due to increased involvement with Europe especially. This weakens Overy's focus on morality especially as in 1939 DFR opened secret talks

with France in order to bypass US neutrality laws and to open more trade links. This shows that there was a considerable economic motivation to US foreign policy and that this, in turn, was not wholly isolationist and 'traditional' as Overy suggests, as these economic motives were largely facilitated by new trade links with Europe.

Commentary

This is a full and detailed response and offers balanced assessments of each extract, though it is longer than could be expected by in examination conditions. The answer is particularly strong in its assessment of Extract A, where the arguments are identified and where contextual knowledge is used appropriately to challenge and corroborate these. The assessments of Extracts B and C are less strong. The overriding point of B is that Roosevelt was internationalist in principle but that his opponents accused him of using this to disguise domestic problems. This has not been fully appreciated and some of the assessment of Extract C goes beyond what is actually argued.

Given the appropriate use of contextual knowledge and identification of several arguments but with limitations, this is a borderline Level 4/5 answer.

Additional Specimen Paper 1K, The making of a superpower: USA, 1865-1975

Question 03

'The Republican Party dominated American politics in the years 1868 to 1912 because it was the party of big business.' Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

Mark scheme

- | | | |
|------------|--|--------------|
| L5: | Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. | 21-25 |
| L4: | Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. | 16-20 |
| L3: | Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. | 11-15 |
| L2: | The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way, although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. | 6-10 |
| L1: | The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. | 1-5 |
| | Nothing worthy of credit. | 0 |

Student one

Response

The Republican Party dominated the era because of a number of factors, including having the support of a larger array of groups in society, such as African Americans and workers, not just big business. However, the largest factor to the success of the Republicans was the fact that they had support from the larger, more populated North, who had not supported the Southern, less progressive conservatives.

The Republican Party had a traditional 'laissez-faire' attitude towards business in the period and let companies do as they pleased due to the belief that the economy was a natural order which did not need to be interfered with. Because of this belief, big monopolies and trusts heavily influenced politics, especially during the 'Gilded Age' where presidents would side with employers in disputes with workers. The Haymarket bomb incident and riots proved to be an example of this, as federal troops shot and killed rioting workers. On the other hand, during the 1890s, Republican politics still dominated yet they had begun to attack trusts with the Sherman Anti-trust Act. Actions like this against big business continued, particularly with Roosevelt, who strengthened the Sherman Act, created federal committees to inspect and regulate business and took on more than 200 cease-and-desist orders against trusts. He took on big robber barons such as Rockefeller and JP Morgan and won, with the Eastern Securities company being made illegal. Other presidents like Taft, who succeeded Roosevelt also made differences such as the Clayton Anti-trust Act which gave the Sherman Act new powers and also engaged in double the amount of cease-and-desist orders as Roosevelt. Therefore, it can be argued that the Gilded Age was a period of political corruption and big business influence, but it was not responsible for the Republican domination as they still dominated even after siding with the workers.

It can be argued that African American's played a large role in the domination of the Republican party as their collective support for the party won the party the sufficient votes they needed to gain victory. After 1868, when the 15th Amendment ensured all African Americans got the vote and couldn't be denied it on account of 'race, creed or previous condition of servitude', inevitably the 4 million former slaves would have voted for the party who had given them freedom and the vote, the Republicans, and would have continued to do that throughout the era. Furthermore, those who supported black rights would have also voted for the Republicans, especially as Democrats still disagreed with African American rights. We can see this through Johnson's attempt to veto the Bill of Rights after sympathizing with Southern Democrats. On the other hand, African Americans made little effect towards republican success. Despite gaining the vote and even having African American congressmen/ senators in places like North Carolina, African American's were still stopped from voting in some states that wished to find loopholes in the law and make it hard for blacks to vote. The 'Grandfather Clause' was introduced in some states, requiring voters grandparents to have given the vote (African American's grandparents obviously did not have the vote) and literacy tests were imposed. In 1895, 250,000 registered voters were African American in Kansas. By 1900, the number had dipped to 5000. This implies that they still did not have much of an impact as Republicans still dominated after the loopholes prevented many African Americans making a difference.

Some have argued that the reason why the Republicans dominated in this era was because of the lack of support Democrats had gathered from the more populated North. The Democrats had connotations with the Confederacy and the 'old traditional farming' community. People not only supported the republicans because of the progressive movement's support for African Americans. Their support of industrialization and immigration showed progress in the developing economy with people believed would not have been possible with the old Democrats. Republican encouragement for Westward expansion, through the Homestead Act (1862) which gave people free land, even to African Americans and women, as well as other government scheme such as Freedman's Bureau helped the republicans to gain a reputation for industrial and progressive change.

In conclusion, African Americans and big business helped the Republicans dominate, but it was mainly a mixture of the two, plus reputation they had gained from the civil war and the bad reputation the Democrats had throughout the era. After depression of 1893, administration set measures and regulated banks and introduced the federal reserve which created a sounder economy. There were also a sign of the federal intervention to improve and support the people and help all groups in society. This is why the Republicans dominated politics in the era.

Commentary

There is an effective and balanced assessment of the importance of big business to Republican success during the period, with appropriate and convincing supporting detail to corroborate the points made. The assessment of the importance of other factors is less effective and becomes occasionally tangential to the question, but there is a clear focus throughout. Overall, this is a mid-level 4 answer.

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