



A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/1L The quest for political stability: Germany, 1871–1991
Report on the Examination

7042
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General Observations

The paper proved accessible to the vast majority of students and generally discriminated well, allowing a full range of marks to be awarded. Time management did not appear to be an issue and most students were able to complete all three questions. It was extraordinary how much was written at times by students where certainly the Advanced Information helped to focus their preparation. Having said that writing more does not always mean a better response and there was certainly a lot of examples of where information for information sake slightly overtook the more important aspect of analysis in relation to the focus of the question.

It always needs to be remembered that Component 1 is a breadth study and that students have to be able to deploy second order concepts such as continuity and change in their analysis of a time period which will be at least 20 years or more. As such knowledge needs to be deployed carefully in terms of enough to provide some support to arguments identified in 01, or made in essays, and not become so precise and specific that development becomes bogged down and does not move the response on.

Question 01

There were some very good answers to the extract question this year. It is pleasing to see that students understand that they have to treat each extract as a separate response although there were some unnecessary developments of comparing all 3 extracts in a final paragraph at the end and deciding which was overall most convincing. This is not a requirement of the question and such development was not considered in the final mark, but it was also not penalised as irrelevant..

Most extracts will have an overall main argument and it is common practice to address the overall argument of the extract first in relation to the key focus of the 01 question. This is not about specific words, or a sentence in the extract, but simply what the historian seems to be saying overall once the extract has been completely read. After that there will generally be other specific arguments made in the extract that reinforce the overall main argument. Students should try to identify at least one of these. There should be an attempt to challenge at some stage, ideally the main argument. There should be a judgement at the end reinforcing the students overall thinking about the extract in terms of whether it was convincing or not.

For some extracts there may be a number of disparate arguments, as opposed to an overall argument, and in such cases the student needs to be able to evaluate these arguments.

There are some approaches in answering the question, which students should try to avoid: the comment on the overall argument should reflect the application of the focus of the question to the extract, not simply be a paraphrase of the extract itself. The focus this year was the post-war economy of West Germany. The presentation of the analysis suggesting ways in which main or sub-arguments within the extract are convincing, or otherwise, should avoid identifying only 'part' of an argument and then fact-checking against own knowledge. The key aim is to indicate the 'whole' argument, be it the main or a sub-argument within the extract then evaluate within the context of own knowledge.

Extract A

The main argument here was that Erhard was the driving force behind the FRG's economic growth. This was generally well developed though there was a tendency for some to turn this into a mini essay on things that Erhard did to the exclusion of trying to evaluate other arguments within the extract. When challenging this main argument many students were too quick to say it was not convincing because there was an economic downturn in 1973. Given the extract is based around the 1950's this makes such analysis have less merit. It would have been far better to mention the role of Adenauer or that Germany had significant advantages at this time such as no expenditure on armaments and therefore, could concentrate fully on the economy.

Extract B

The main argument here was that there was a range of factors that helped Germany. Most students were able to identify this as the extract made this obvious by the actual specific content. However a lot of students developed as a main argument the idea of the economy being a 'miracle' which demonstrates the need for students to read the whole extract carefully first and not become fixated on a specific word or passage.

Extract C

The main argument here was that the economy was not as much of a free-market as Erhard or the Americans would like and that the government still had a significant control over the economy. This was the least understood extract of the three. Reward was given where any argument within the extract was developed in a convincing way with some relevant support.

Question 02

This was the most popular question for the essays and given it was about Bismarck this was not surprising. The key focus was on the Reichstag's impact on Bismarck's policies. Clearly students had done a lot of preparation for such a question and the Advanced Information sent to centres had helped considerably to target learning. Students may have learnt more but more does not always mean better. The key to a good essay answer is how well any support used is relevant and linked to the focus of the question. As such, long developments on the Kulturkampf/ anti-socialist laws etc. that become descriptive and not moving the answer on are less effective unless they are clearly linked to how it showed Reichstag influence or not.

Question 03

This was the least popular question for the essays though generally demonstrating some of the strongest responses of all. The key focus was whether militarism dominated Germany between 1890-1914. The discriminator here was in the balance provided. Most students could identify aspects of militarism but challenging this was the key. The most common, and effective, response was around the development of socialism and its impact on government policy over time. A good essay will always be focused with a range of ideas and some balance. For the highest marks

students should be able to think conceptually about their arguments. In this case the idea of a natural deference towards the Kaiser and respect for the army for much of the period which made militarism an almost natural instinct within the German psyche.

Question 04

This was a popular question with students and one that proved quite accessible. The key focus was based on economic problems being the cause for the weak democracy in Germany, 1914-34. As always with the essay questions the requirement is for a good range of ideas with some balance. Most students were able to describe how economic issues caused weaknesses in democracy, an obvious example being the Great Depression and people voting towards the extremes. As mentioned throughout this report the breadth study is, partly, about concepts of change over time and so any support needs to be enough to explain an idea and how it links to the focus. Typically, many students would describe events like the hyperinflation of 1923 in vast detail, from causes to impact, especially how a loaf of bread cost 200 million marks, when all that was really needed was how that event shaped people's feelings about the Weimar. A key discriminator with this essay was based round the range of ideas covering the period in question. This does not need to be an exhaustive year by year breakdown but it is expected that students should cover the time span indicated in the essay question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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