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# A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/2K International Relations and Global Conflict, c1890-1941  
Report on the Examination

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## General Comments

Students were able to demonstrate a good level of knowledge in their essays this year. The responses varied in their command of detail and ability to focus on the issue given to them. The content of the sources in Question 1 was accessible to nearly all the students, but the contextual knowledge required, of Italy's intervention in the First World War, was more challenging. A successful answer to the sources question requires a command of three elements: the content of the source; the provenance which is given, and the contextual understanding which the student brings to the issue in question.

Students are now more confident in their approach to the sources question. However, there are still too many generic responses, especially to the provenance of the source. The most successful answers come from the students who are thoughtful about the information they have been given, especially in regard to provenance. It is not always possible, or necessary, to write a great deal about the provenance, but what is written by the student should show some awareness of the context of the source. An example from this year's paper would be source A, which had a fairly short and straightforward provenance. Those students who assumed that this would give a reasonably objective account of the events, as they were understood in the middle of the war, were appropriately focused. Source B and C were more obviously partisan, and this is where the contextual understanding is so important. Little credit can be given to the assertion that Source B is valuable because it gives the viewpoint of Austria-Hungary without further elaboration, if only of what that view is. More effective were the answers that recognised the source for what it was and then used some contextual knowledge to support and/or challenge the content of the source.

The essay questions each have a 'given factor', namely the national movements, the punishment of Germany and the self-interest of Britain and France. These should be the focus of the students' responses and, in order to demonstrate a good understanding of the question, they must be dealt with in some detail. It was encouraging that, in most cases, the responses seen did begin with the issue given in the question, although weaker answers tended to offer a narrative account, with occasional links back to the question. The very best answers examined the interaction between the factors, for example the relative importance of the national movements in weakening Turkey compared to the interference in the region by the great powers.

## Question 1

The content of the sources was largely grasped by the students, and there was an awareness of context. Unfortunately in some cases there was a lack of contextual knowledge about the issue of Italy's entry to the First World War and so this made it difficult for those students to assess the value of the sources. Without any context to either support or challenge the source content, the arguments about value are rather shallow and the answer can only be partial. On the other hand, a little context, used appropriately, can be very effective.

Source A makes several points about Italy's entry into the First World War, from a reasonably neutral perspective. There was some speculation about the possible bias of the source towards Italy, given the sinking of the 'Lusitania' and the use of the phrase 'a most unfortunate position'. Some students read the provenance too quickly and assumed that the source was a 'story' and therefore unreliable. The source recognises that Italy was put in a difficult situation with her allies, that support for the war increased in Italy over 1914-1915 and that the desire for land was important. This was supported by the context of the nationalist campaign and the desire for land in

Tyrol, Trieste, Dalmatia, Istria and Trentino. There was good awareness of Italy's pact in 1902 with France and the secret Treaty of London.

The content and provenance of Source B were accessible and the tone was recognised as being one of shock at the betrayal. Students were able to recognise the purpose of the source and therefore doubted its value, although relatively few answers were able to back this up with contextual knowledge. Most frequently used was the defensive nature of the Triple Alliance. Some answers used Austria's actions in the Balkans in 1908 as evidence that Franz Joseph was not telling the truth when he said 'we did not damage (Italy's) honour and interests.' This was good use of context to challenge the source, which could be linked back to the provenance.

Source C was also understood in relation to content and provenance and a tone of moral indignation was noted. The better answers used the details of the 'July crisis' to support the statement by Salandra, and there were some excellent challenges to the view that Italy had immediately been severe in its condemnation of Austrian aggression. The context of the Risorgimento, the nationalist movement in Italy and the desire for the 'terre irredente' was deployed in the stronger answers to support the view that 'Italy's aspirations had long been known'.

## **Question 2**

This was the least popular question. However, it is clear from the number of high level responses that the Ottoman Empire has its core of enthusiasts. There were some very clear expositions of the Young Turk Movement and the Macedonian uprising. These were balanced with factors such as the actions of the Sultan, the impact of western ideas and the intrusions of the great powers into Turkish territory. Strong answers were seen which were specific about the consequences of the national movements and the links with the other factors. Weaker answers showed only a vague awareness of the given factor of 'national movements' and tended to be descriptive. Occasional assertions that 'this was important' do not convince.

## **Question 3**

This was the most popular question and it gave a broad scope to students to demonstrate their knowledge of the aims of the peace-makers and the treaties of 1919-20. Most of the answers focussed mainly on the Treaty of Versailles, although those that did not go beyond this to any of the other treaties of 1919-1920 could not be said to have grasped the 'full demands' of the question. Good knowledge of the treaties was shown, and balance was often achieved by challenging the assumption that the treaties were only about Germany, with appropriate reference to the treatment of Germany's allies. Balance was also achieved by an analysis of the aims of the difference peace-makers at Versailles, with a concentration on the 'Big Three'. The most common weakness of answers was an excessive level of description of the terms, or description of aims, without reference to the concept of 'punishment'.

## **Question 4**

A number of very impressive answers to this question were seen, which were able to master the analysis of the two crises and were secure about the concept of 'self-interest'. However, overall the issue of the 'self-interest of Britain and France' proved to be the more difficult of the given factors to support in this year's set of essays. Most commonly, the Manchuria failure was put down to economic self-interest and the Abyssinian crisis to the rise of Hitler and the need to keep Mussolini

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in the Stresa Front. Too often, the Manchurian and Abyssinian Crises were described, and reasons for the failure of the response given, without reference to the motives of Britain and France. The role of the USA, the weaknesses of the League's structure, and the aggressive nationalism of Japan and Italy, were the most frequently offered balancing explanations.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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