



A-level  
**History**

7042/1L

Report on the Examination

7042  
June 2024

Version: 1.0

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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.

There was evidence that students had taken time to plan and structure their answers and there was some careful reading of the extracts in Q.01. Not surprisingly, some were more confident than others in assembling their answers to the compulsory extract evaluation question, particularly when it came to identification of arguments and appropriate context to help in the evaluation of how convincing they were. In the essay questions most adopted a focused and balanced approach and the very best showed judgement and upheld an argument, linking well to the question throughout, whilst providing some conceptual awareness. There were, of course, some, whose knowledge of material or understanding of developments, were inadequate for the tasks set. Others, meanwhile, had some good knowledge but were let down by poor technique. It is largely to help such students that the following comments are offered.

It must 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 can at least to 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 concentrated that development becomes bogged down, does not move the response on, and fails to cover the breadth in question.

## 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.

The main aim of the 01 question is to identify arguments made within each extract, based on the key focus of the question, and evaluate how convincing they are using relevant own knowledge as context. The focus this year was the development of the German economy in the years 1919 to 1939. Ideally the student should identify an overall main argument for each extract, in relation to the focus. It is a stronger response if the student is able to express this overall argument in a holistic way. This is not about specific words, or a sentence in the extract, but using their own words to express what the historian seems to be saying overall once the extract has been completely read. This makes it more obvious to the examiner that the student has understood the extract. 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 and develop them.

It needs to be remembered that in some cases an overall argument may not be that obvious with an extract, and that it may have a number of disparate arguments. In such cases as long as the student identifies any arguments made, then they will be rewarded.

There should be an attempt to challenge an argument at some stage in a response. A challenge does not have to be made for all 3 extracts, but it would be ideal to see this in at least two of the three extracts as appropriate. The main argument is always a strong one to develop but whatever argument the student

chooses this should only be done once in the analysis of the extract. Some students wasted time by challenging too many arguments.

There should be a small judgement at the end reinforcing the students overall thinking about the extract in terms of convincing or not. This should be a brief paragraph only, using ideas like the main argument being too narrow, one-sided or balanced. Some students wasted far too much time literally re-writing their answer in the judgement.

A key discriminator with 01 is the actual identification of specific arguments made in the extracts. When developing arguments there are some approaches which students should try to avoid:

- the evaluation of 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 presentation of the analysis suggesting ways in which the main or sub-arguments within the extract are convincing, or otherwise, should avoid identifying only 'part' of an actual argument made, or worst, developing simple 'statements' made in the extract, which are then taken out of context, and simply fact-checked against own knowledge.

Such development cannot be rewarded by the examiner as it not demonstrating understanding of an actual argument. 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.

Finally, evaluation of arguments needs be developed in a way that any own knowledge used should be sufficient enough to explain why they are convincing or not, and not become a long commentary, bordering on an essay style approach, which wastes time and is not rewarded.

### **Extract A**

The overall main argument focused on the idea of a continuity with the economy through the period that was based on free-market capitalism. This was not widely understood by many students, which was not a major issue as long as they identify and develop other arguments within the extract. However, careful reading of the whole extract may have made identification of main argument easier as it is indicated twice. Clearly students would need to understand what free-market capitalism is.

Reward was given to any development that picked up on industrialists maintaining influence over the economy. An example of students developing statements rather than arguments was in overlong developments of the 1923 hyperinflation/ recovery under Stresemann from 1924, which were not clearly linked to the actual argument of industrialists maintaining influence, and showing how this was the case or not.

### **Extract B**

The overall main argument focused of change with the economy through the period and movement away from free-market capitalism. This again was not widely understood by many students, which was not a major issue as long as they identify and develop other arguments within the extract. Careful reading of the whole extract may have made identification of main argument easier as it is indicated twice. An example of students taking an argument out of context was at the beginning of the extract when it indicates that key events like the First World War and the Treaty of Versailles resulted in a desire for change in economic direction. Many students simply focused on developing exhaustive lists of examples of how these events impacted on Germany, which was not really evaluating the argument, but just context for context sake.

### Extract C

The overall main argument focused on the idea that the economy of the Weimar Republic was weak, whereas under the Nazis it was strong. This was the best understood extract by students, and this was reflected by generally strong identification of relevant arguments with relevant evaluations/ context. A main criticism with this extract was an emphasis to develop the Nazi element only. It needs to be reminded that all the extracts deliberately cover a breadth of period, and the students needs to address that in their evaluation of arguments.

### Question 02

A relatively popular question for the essays. The key focus was based on how effective chancellors responded to the challenge of socialism between 1878 – 1914. This was generally well developed by students with most taking a chancellor-by-chancellor approach. Bismarck and Caprivi were usually the best understood in terms of relevant context. After that it could become quite vague with various chancellors being mixed up with inaccurate supporting detail. Breadth on this question was an issue at times but a key discriminator was balance, particularly with arguments supporting the view that chancellors were effective. This was especially obvious for any development on later chancellors. With an essay students are being asked to make an argument about what they think in relation to the question focus. As such, good essays, with strong overall judgements, were rewarded higher than those responses more inclined to ‘sit on the fence.’

### Question 03

A reasonably popular question for the essays though generally demonstrating some of the strongest responses of all. The key focus was the idea that little was done to confront the legacy of Nazism between 1945 – 1969. Most students were able to identify a range of ideas that covered the breadth with balance. A key issue for this question was over-development of some ideas, especially those related to student protests in the 1960’s as an example of confronting the Nazi legacy. This was legitimate as an idea but lent itself for weaker students to then describe all the various forms of protest from the 1960’s which was not needed, and therefore, not moving the response on, not being highly rewarded. Selective supporting detail is what is needed. For the highest marks students should be able to think conceptually about their ideas. An example might be that the need to establish democracy in Germany through the economy overrode the need to deal with former Nazis, especially in the early years of the FRG.

### Question 04

The key focus was based round the extent of social change in Germany between 1969 – 1991. There were some strong responses that clearly indicated a range of ideas with good support to indicate change or not, and what was meant by the idea of ‘change.’ However such responses were more the exception rather than the rule. The key issues were generalist development and drift from the focus for many students. Perhaps being the end of the specification some students may be concentrating more at this stage with earlier, meatier parts of the specification but it needs to be remembered that all parts of the specification are valid when it comes to questions. A major discriminator on this question was one of balance. Most students could describe something about Brandt and reforms, or women in the workforce (more opportunities) or simple ideas about reunification, no matter how generalised the assessment may

be. However balance, with ideas like how the elites were still in place or that the initial optimism of reunification gave way to pessimism for many, was usually developed poorly or not developed at all.

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

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