



AS HISTORY 7041/2L

Italy and Fascism, c1900–1945

Component 2L The crisis of Liberal Italy and the Rise of Mussolini, c1900–1926

Mark scheme

June 2025

Version: 1.0 Final



Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from [aqa.org.uk](https://www.aqa.org.uk)

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Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly Level 3 with a small amount of Level 4 material it would be placed in Level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the Level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Section A

- 0 1** With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, which of these two sources is more valuable in explaining Fascist violence in Italy in 1922?

[25 marks]*Target: AO2*

Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within the historical context.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the value of the sources in relation to the issue identified in the question. They will evaluate the sources thoroughly in order to provide a well-substantiated conclusion. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will provide a range of relevant well-supported comments on the value of the sources for the issue identified in the question. There will be sufficient comment to provide a supported conclusion but not all comments will be well-substantiated, and judgements will be limited. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. **16–20**
- L3:** The answer will provide some relevant comments on the value of the sources and there will be some explicit reference to the issue identified in the question. Judgements will however, be partial and/or thinly supported. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer will be partial. There may be either some relevant comments on the value of one source in relation to the issue identified in the question or some comment on both, but lacking depth and having little, if any, explicit link to the issue identified in the question. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. **6–10**
- L1:** The answer will either describe source content or offer stock phrases about the value of the source. There may be some comment on the issue identified in the question but it is likely to be limited, unsubstantiated and unconvincing. The response demonstrates limited understanding of context. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Students must deploy knowledge of the historical context to show an understanding of the relationship between the sources and the issues raised in the question, when assessing the significance of provenance, the arguments deployed in the sources and the tone and emphasis of the sources. Descriptive answers which fail to do this should be awarded no more than Level 2 at best. Answers should address both the value and the limitations of the sources for the particular question and purpose given.

In responding to this question, students may choose to address each source in turn or to adopt a more comparative approach in order to arrive at a judgement. Either approach is equally valid and what follows is indicative of the evaluation which may be relevant.

Source A: in assessing the value of this source as an explanation, students may refer to the following:

Provenance and tone

- the timing of Mussolini's speech to Fascists is important because it comes just before a campaign of violence against Socialists in north-central Italy in the spring/summer of 1922
- the source has value because it has a specific audience, intended for the Fascists only. It reveals that the use of violence was a political tactic by the Fascists
- the tone is anti-socialist, whilst Fascism is presented as moderate. Socialists are 'stubborn', 'tyrannical', 'illiberal', 'overbearing'. Fascist violence must be seen as a 'legitimate act of revenge'.

Content and argument

- that political violence by the Fascists had a clear purpose which was to defeat the Socialist threat. This could be seen in the context of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the occupation of the factories, the votes for the PSI
- that Fascist violence was necessary in order to win the political argument. This could be related to the context of fascist ideology. It could be challenged by the sense of disorder created by Fascists
- that Mussolini wanted to be seen as a moderate, at the head of a legitimate movement. This could be contextually linked to Mussolini's 'dual policy'. We might question how far Mussolini actually deplored violence.

Source B: in assessing the value of this source as an explanation, students may refer to the following:

Provenance and tone

- the author is valuable. From the content we can deduce that the writer, a historian and a socialist, has either witnessed a Fascist attack or has had contact with people who have. Bias in favour of the socialists may reduce the value of the author as historian
- the date and place of publication shows that it is reflecting on events, from an outside viewpoint, so free of Fascist control. This could be valuable. On the other hand, the clear anti-Fascist position might suggest that the purpose of the source is to exaggerate the impact of Fascist violence
- the tone of the source emphasises Fascist brutality and the innocence of the workers. The Fascists' eyes were 'glaring'. They forced the workers to 'leave one by one', and 'stabbed them in the back'. The workers were merely 'playing cards' and 'obeyed' the instruction they were given. The victims included 'old men' and a '14-year-old child'.

Content and argument

- that Fascist violence was brutal and gratuitous. This could be linked to the context of the Fascist attacks in the summer of 1922
- that the Socialists posed no threat and did not fight back. This could be challenged by the context of the violence of 1922 and the Socialist general strike
- that the Fascist violence was enabled by ease of transport. This could be linked to the violence across north-central Italy in 1922, and the possible support the Fascists had from the establishment.

In arriving at a judgement as to which source might be of greater value, students might consider that Source A reveals Mussolini's tactics and so helps us to understand the reasons for Fascist violence. Mussolini might be seen as cynical in his approach. Source B might be seen as exaggerated. On the other hand, Source B gives a detailed account which suggests that the Fascists claim to be legitimate and preventing violence was bogus.

Section B

- 0 2** 'The Nationalist Party was the main threat to Giolitti's government in the years 1911 to 1914.'

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. They 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 leading to substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** 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. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be analytical comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance. However, there may be some generalisation and judgements will be limited and only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** The answer will show some understanding of the full demands of the question and the answer will be adequately organised. There will be appropriate information showing an understanding of some key features and/or issues but the answer may be limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some comment in relation to the question. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer will be 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**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments supporting the view that the Nationalist Party was the main threat to Giolitti's government in the years 1911 to 1914 might include:

- the Nationalist Party was formed in 1910. It was always in opposition to Giolitti with no interest in joining in his 'trasformismo' politics
- the Nationalists criticised 'little Italy' and wanted a larger army and a more aggressive foreign policy, including imperialism and the recovery of lands from Austria. They took credit for the Libyan War but blamed Giolitti for the costs
- the Nationalists thought Giolitti had made too many concessions to Socialists. The Nationalists attracted middle-class support and had powerful supporters in the press
- Giolitti underestimated the Nationalist Party as it was only recently established and did not have a wide political programme.

Arguments challenging the view that the Nationalist Party was the main threat to Giolitti's government in the years 1911 to 1914 might include:

- the Nationalist Party was initially a small movement, with a narrow base of support from the elite. It had few political ideas beyond hatred of Giolitti's Liberalism
- the extension of the franchise threatened Giolitti's ability to control the parliament through 'trasformismo'. After the Libyan War, the franchise was extended to 8.5 million
- Socialism was the greater threat. The PSI was led by extremists after 1912. Labour disputes in Turin in 1913. Giolitti seemed to be too soft on the Socialists
- Giolitti was weakened by the influence of the Catholic Church in politics, and its refusal to compromise with the Socialists. Giolitti fell from power because he could not satisfy the Catholics and the Radicals/Socialists, as shown, for example, by the 'Gentolini Pact' of 1913.

Answers may show an understanding of the rapid rise of Nationalism as a significant political force and the pressure that this put on Giolitti. The Nationalists saw the process of unification as unfinished and thought that Liberal Italy was 'little government', unworthy of the nation. This may be balanced by an awareness of the other threats to Giolitti's government, including the inherent weakness of 'trasformismo' politics, especially in a time of mass democracy. Pressure also came from the Socialists and the Catholics and Giolitti's compromises failed to satisfy them.

- 0 3** 'In the years 1922 to 1926, Mussolini's leadership was the main strength of the Fascist movement.'

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. They 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 leading to substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** 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. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be analytical comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance. However, there may be some generalisation and judgements will be limited and only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** The answer will show some understanding of the full demands of the question and the answer will be adequately organised. There will be appropriate information showing an understanding of some key features and/or issues but the answer may be limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some comment in relation to the question. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer will be 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**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments supporting the view that in the years 1922 to 1926, Mussolini's leadership was the main strength of the Fascist movement might include:

- Mussolini was seen as a strong figure who could bring order and restore Italy. In particular, he was anti-Socialist
- Mussolini won the support of the elites, for example the King, business leaders and land owners, because of his anti-Socialist stance. They were prepared to give him dictatorial powers
- Mussolini was able to control the excesses of the Fascist movement, for example curb the violence of the Ras with the creation of a National Militia. The Fascist movement was diverse and needed strong leadership
- Mussolini's image was promoted by the propaganda, the Cult of the Duce. He was a new Roman Emperor, drawing strength from Italy's glorious past.

Arguments challenging the view that in the years 1922 to 1926, Mussolini's leadership was the main strength of the Fascist movement might include:

- the strength of the movement lay in the ideology, which offered many things to many different groups. It promised to restore Italy's greatness, to complete the unification (Risorgimento), and to be strong and decisive. This meant that Fascism had broad support
- Fascist propaganda was a source of strength. This included the Cult of the Duce, as well as the glorification of foreign and economic policy success, for example Corfu, the acquisition of Fiume and the post-war recovery under De Stefani
- the Fascist movement still relied on the use of violence, for example the murder of Matteotti and the intimidation accompanying the passage of the Acerbo Law. Mussolini was not in control of this violence and was nearly overthrown in 1924
- the strength of the Fascist movement was due to the weakness of the opposition, for example the willingness of the King to give Mussolini power, the surrender of the Catholic Party under pressure from the Pope, and the acceptance of the legal changes to the constitution.

Answers may show an understanding of the appeal of Fascism in the period 1922 to 1926 and of Mussolini's role in controlling the movement and making it acceptable to the established elites. Mussolini had a 'twin-track' strategy. His domination led to the idea that 'Mussolinianism' had replaced Fascism. On the other hand, he relied on the dynamism of the movement. He was almost toppled by Fascist violence in 1924 and he had to take on ideas such as Corporatism to placate the Fascist radicals. The movement was strengthened by the fear of Socialism.