



AS HISTORY 7041/20

Democracy and Nazism: Germany, 1918–1945

Component 20 The Weimar Republic, 1918–1933

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

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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 the Nazi rise to power by March 1933?

[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 article is taken from a British newspaper, which helps explain its neutral tone. Students may reflect on the political turmoil within Germany as the Weimar Republic collapsed and recognise that it is valuable to have an independent, outside perspective which shows the range of different responses to the Nazi rise to power
- students may consider it useful to have the perspective of an eyewitness in Berlin because of the insight they would gain from being among many German citizens. They may, however, consider whether Germans in other cities and in the countryside shared the same perspective as Berliners
- students may reflect on the date of this article and comment that it provides valuable insight into the legitimate political manoeuvrings that helped Hitler into power during January 1933, before the Nazis were able to clamp down on opposition.

Content and argument

- the journalist comments on the driving ambition of Hitler. Students may discuss aspects of his political leadership during the 1920s, perhaps commenting on his seizure of control over the DAP, or how Mein Kampf disseminated his political ideology, or focusing on the energy and skill he brought to the electoral campaigns of 1932. They may conclude that this source is valuable because it captures Hitler's unique contribution to the rise of the Nazis
- the journalist also describes the nature of the political gamble that Hindenburg took when he appointed Hitler as Chancellor. Students may comment on the political turmoil leading up to this event, or they may comment on the role of Backstairs Intrigue. They may reflect on Hindenburg's reasons for supporting Hitler and note that this source is valuable for showing how widespread nationalist, traditional political ideologies opened the door to Nazi extremism.
- the article is also valuable for showing how the Nazis' rise to power was startling to many ordinary Germans. Students may discuss the fear and alarm generated by the SA's brutality, particularly around election times; they may draw out some of the negative reactions of conservatives to Hitler, echoing Hindenburg's miscalculation that Hitler's humble origins would constrain his overall power.

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

Provenance and tone

- students may consider Diels to be a valuable eyewitness to the events surrounding the Reichstag Fire because he would have been responsible for bringing the perpetrator of the fire to justice. Students may be aware that the Gestapo had not yet been created and may reflect on his role being critical in supporting the Nazi rise to power as a result
- students may consider the publication date, 1949, and note that Diels could have been motivated to portray himself as having been an innocent following orders, not solely in respect of the immediate aftermath of the Fire, but also with the hindsight that the development of the camp system into which political prisoners were funnelled later extended into genocidal crimes. They may consider that his is an unreliable testimony
- Diels' bewildered tone is somewhat surprising, given his senior policing role. Students may decide that he is attempting to absolve himself from responsibility for the surge in political murders and imprisonment that were triggered by the Fire by emphasising the fact that he could not understand the orders he was given but that he was obliged to comply.

Content and argument

- students may comment on the rapid arrival of the Nazi elite at the Reichstag by discussing the skill with which Hitler turned the Fire to Nazi political advantage, particularly through photo opportunities and speeches on the night, and through the immediately consequential Enabling Act which allowed the Nazis to consolidate their rise to political power by fatally undermining the Weimar Republic
- students may also reflect on the way that the Nazis embarked on the rapid destruction of all political opposition, once Hitler had become Chancellor. They might note the extent to which the Nazis had already prepared their lists of Communists to arrest, imprison and murder. They might discuss the earliest use of concentration camps, including Dachau, for political prisoners, and conclude that the Nazi rise to power might appear opportunistic but was in fact underpinned by strong preparation
- Diels describes the scale of orders he was given, not just for the arrest of Communists but also Social Democrats. Students may recognise that this is valuable as it is a pattern that other key moments in the Nazi rise to, and consolidation of, power would follow. They might describe the ability of the Nazis to reach across the whole of Germany because of developments such as the structural organisation into Gaue that had taken place in the 1920s, which meant that a local event could become a trigger for a nationwide action.

In arriving at a judgement as to which source might be of greater value, students might discuss the difference between Source A's focus on the legitimate political process and Source B's focus on opportunism and violence. They may decide that the independent view of Source A makes it very useful for understanding the Nazi rise to power because Germans were so heavily influenced by the propaganda and control exerted by the Nazis even before their rise to power was complete. They may conclude that Source B is more valuable as Nazi political success was consistently made possible by the effectiveness of SA intimidation and the brutal suppression of opponents. They may consider that the provenance of Source B is so problematic that it is less valuable than Source A overall.

Section B

- 0 2** 'The invasion of the Ruhr by France and Belgium was the most significant challenge faced by the Weimar Republic in the years 1921 to 1924.'

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 invasion of the Ruhr by France and Belgium was the most significant challenge faced by the Weimar Republic in the years 1921 to 1924 might include:

- the invasion was a further humiliation to German national identity and pride, at a time when the right wing was strong. Right-wing parties, such as the NSDAP, were already channelling widely-held grievances against France's punitive approach at Versailles; to be invaded by such an enemy added further energy to the right wing, most visible in the Munich Putsch of November 1923
- the invasion caused upheaval to German industry, because of the strikes and other forms of passive resistance that were the response of German workers, and the Weimar government. This was particularly harmful because German industrial resources were so concentrated in the Ruhr region, compounding the already significant economic pressures
- the invasion and its immediate consequences catalysed the hyperinflation crisis which brought misery across Germany. Newspaper articles and photos critical of government actions, coupled with rising rates of malnutrition and mortality, fuelled discontent and a further rise in political extremism, providing clear evidence that the Republic was weakening.

Arguments challenging the view that the invasion of the Ruhr by France and Belgium was the most significant challenge faced by the Weimar Republic in the years 1921 to 1924 might include:

- Germany's economy was already struggling in the years 1921 to 1924. Notably, inflation was high across the period and was compounded by shortages of resources caused by ongoing economic sanctions, while unemployment was stubbornly – but not catastrophically – high. While the economic crisis came to a head in 1923, Germany had never been in a position to meet the demands of the Treaty of Versailles and did not experience economic stability or recovery until post-1924
- the invasion and consequent hyperinflation had a positive international impact, with rising sympathy for Germany's plight leading directly to the financial support Stresemann needed to resolve the financial crisis, and the subsequent investment of the Dawes Plan which facilitated Germany's economic recovery from 1924 onwards
- the ongoing opposition of the right wing towards the Weimar Republic consistently undermined its attempts to build a stable consensus. While right-wing reaction to the invasion was notable, the right wing was very influential in many different spheres during these years. The narrative of 'November Criminals' became stronger during these years to over 300 political assassinations, including those of Rathenau and Erzberger, which could be perpetrated with relative impunity, as a result of a sympathetic right-wing judiciary. Thousands of men were members of paramilitary organisations, including the SA, causing civil turmoil through intimidation and violence. The NSDAP's challenge to the Republic, the 1923 Munich Putsch, was a failure but its very existence and possibility demonstrated the insecurity of the regime
- the instability of 1923 led to a resurgence of communist attempts to seize power, notably in Thuringia, Saxony and the Rhineland. While the early communist threat to the Republic had been suppressed in 1919, it had not been eradicated, and was consistently supported by the Communist International.

Students may argue that the invasion of the Ruhr directly caused the hyperinflation crisis and they may judge this as the most significant challenge of the years 1921 to 1924 because of the impact, both deep and wide, that this had across the nation. Students may recognise the interrelationship of consequences in that they may conclude economic turmoil, and the resultant social impact of this further contributed to rising Nationalism and political unrest, or they may begin to discuss whether economic problems must become politicised if a political regime is to be seriously challenged.

0 3 'In the years 1924 to 1928, the German economy fully recovered.'

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 1924 to 1928, the German economy fully recovered might include:

- by 1928, industrial production levels were higher than those of 1913, with notable industrial corporations such as Krupps, Bosch, IG Farben and Siemens booming. By 1928, Germany's productivity was second only to the USA, while its economic growth rate exceeded those of France and Britain
- the economic problems caused by reparations were resolved within this period, to a manageable extent. The Dawes Plan brought immediate, structured relief, while the Allied Reparations Commission continued to work on ensuring long-term stability
- Stresemann's skills as Foreign Minister facilitated the recovery of Germany's international trade, with exports rising by 40%, despite the overseas territorial losses of the Treaty of Versailles
- working conditions and living standards rose significantly, with hourly wages rising steadily from 1924 to 1928, making Germany's workers the highest paid in Europe. Improved welfare schemes, including high quality unemployment and sickness benefits, were introduced in 1927. A comprehensive house building programme reduced homelessness by 60%.

Arguments challenging the view that in the years 1924 to 1928, the German economy fully recovered might include:

- German agricultural economy did not recover, with a catastrophic price shock in 1925/26 leading to protests and riots. In particular, the steady rise of imported foods meant that farmers had to become more productive to survive, requiring investment in new technologies which were, for many farmers, unaffordable. By the end of 1928, Germany's agricultural output reached just 25% of its pre-war value
- members of Germany's professional/middle classes, who had been so severely struck by hyperinflation, did not experience recovery in this period. Unemployment remained disproportionately high in this sector, while unemployment benefit did not always reach those in need, and the average industrial worker's wage was equal to, or in excess of, professional incomes by 1928
- Germany's recovery rested on loans from the USA, which were funnelled into the industrial sector. Imports exceeded exports throughout the period, and tax receipts never met the spending commitments of the Weimar governments.

Students may argue that Germany's industrial economic recovery was exceptional during this period and they may consider that this was such a turnaround from the collapse of 1923 that it, overall, supports the question's thesis. Students may discuss whether the undoubted strength of one sector offsets significant weaknesses in others and will have a solid understanding of the deeper economic issues caused by over-reliance on American investment.