

Modern History

Course Code: HDM315115

Question 1

The most common problem candidates faced was connecting the stimulus with the relevant parts of the nation/period they had studied. For Nazi Germany, few candidates were able to connect “needs of the people and the economic resources available” to the dire economic situation in Germany which helped propel the Nazis into power. Most candidates did an adequate job of describing the social, political and economic change that occurred in their chosen country, however, only a minority could offer a discussion on what the drivers of that change were. Students who could identify the changes that took place, what the drivers of that change were and connect it then with the stimulus were generally only ‘A’ students. Some general points:

- Candidates should avoid spending too much (if any) time on history outside the prescribed period, e.g too many responses talked about pre-1917 Russia for too long; a small number of Australia responses made the same mistake.
- Many responses, almost half, simply gave a narrative account of their nation’s history. While this may offer satisfactory evidence for criteria 2,4 and 6 – these candidates may have not achieved anything on criterion 3, and generally did not receive above a ‘C’ for the other criterion.

Question 2

Mostly the same issues identified in question 1 arose in question 2 also. Connecting the stimulus with any of the nation’s histories was a challenging task, and it was noted by markers that for some nations the stimulus was more relevant, while less relevant for others. A number of candidates also appeared to be prepared for responses related to nationalism or ideology, but were not able to adapt the material they had to the question that was on the exam. Once again a number of students wrote for too long about events outside the prescribed time period. Any more than half a page on background history is not an efficient use of exam time.

Question 3

Responses to the question were generally good. The question lent itself to narrative responses, and a large number of responses gave a narrative account of the Cold War, with only very general, but adequate, descriptions of the various historical schools of thought (Traditionalist/Orthodox, Revisionist and Post-Revisionist). Better answers discussed key causes of the Cold War and could connect them with the schools of thought - for example, offering a description of the Marshall Plan – and then analysing how different historians have interpreted the motives of Marshall and Truman in implementing such a plan.

Some markers noted that many candidates fell short in addressing criterion 4. While most responses implicitly offered evidence through detailed and factually correct description, using that evidence to further an argument is required for higher ratings. For example, some students used primary sources, such as the Kennan telegram or NSC-68 and linked those documents with how the Cold War started. A number of candidates evidently may have not managed their time adequately, and there were a number of incomplete question 3 essays.

Question 4

The question asked for the motivations of 2-3 terrorist organisations and responses by the West. Far too many responses neglected to discuss the idea of responses. Stronger essays dealt with responses by the West, specifics of these responses and their relative effectiveness. Again, whilst the course content begins at 2000, and it would be expected that students would mention historical issues that have caused terrorist activity, 3 pages on the breakup of the Ottoman Empire and WWI is too much. Good responses addressed criterion 3 in a more nuanced way, rather than just identifying the problem of defining terrorism. Many candidates discussed the academic debate about what actually motivates terrorism and the success (or not) of the War on Terror.

Question 5

No candidates responded to this question.

Question 6

No candidates responded to this question.