



General Certificate of Secondary Education June 2011

History B 4045

**40454 International Relations: Conflict
and Peace in the 20th Century**

<i>Report on the Examination</i>

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40454 International Relations: Conflict and Peace in the 20th Century

Introduction

As last year, there was a small but mixed entry for this specification covering the whole of the ability range. It appeared as if some centres had prepared their students specifically for the examination, possibly as part of an enrichment programme, and on the whole these candidates produced the best scripts. Other centres entered small numbers of candidates and appear to have treated it as some sort of 'fill in' or 'fall back' situation and from the evidence offered, the students had done little preparation and mostly ended up in the lower reaches of the mark scale.

This paper was assessing knowledge and the use of knowledge. There were no 'easy marks' to be obtained by way of comprehension of sources. Students had to rely on their own knowledge to answer the questions, so it proved more difficult for weaker candidates than the previous Short Course Paper 1 option. The only difference between this examination and the full course (40451) is the second question on each topic. Consequently this report will concentrate on these questions. Comments on how the other questions worked in the examination can be found in the **report on the full course**.

Questions

The popularity of topics was different from the full course; the most popular topic attempted being Topic 2, followed by Topics 3, 4, 1 and 5 with very few answers to Topic 6. Good candidates answered these questions well, developing two or three explained reasons to obtain full marks. Too many either lacked the knowledge to develop an explanation, or simply thought that this question was similar to the 'describe' question and listed the main points without explanation. In the questions unique to this course, questions 14 and 05 produced the best overall responses, while 01 and 08 the weakest.

Topic 1

- 02** Many candidates were well informed about Kaiser Wilhelm, often giving long descriptions of his childhood and how this had helped to develop his character. The more relevant foreign policy aims tended to concentrate on 'Weltpolitik', Morocco and the Naval Rivalry with Britain. Surprisingly in view of the lead in to the topic provided by question 01, very few mentioned the support he gave to Austria-Hungary in 1914 and the reasons for it.

Topic 2

- 05** As usual, candidates had excellent knowledge of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and were very adept at reproducing them in answer to this question, normally concentrating on reparations and listing the areas of land that Germany had to give up. The biggest weakness was that some candidates only listed them and did not attempt to explain how each one of the terms described was a punishment to Germany, which is what the question asked them to do.

Topic 3

- 08** Good answers to this question explained why Britain and France feared war in 1936, how they were distracted by the Abyssinian Crisis and the British belief that communism was a greater danger than the Nazis therefore sought to build up Hitler as a barrier to communist expansion. There were some attempts to explain Britain's doubts over the legitimacy of the demilitarisation but all too often answers were unexplained snippets such as 'because he was only marching into his own backyard'.

Topic 4

- 11** There were some good descriptions of how the USA got involved in the Korean War to defend South Korea from attack, but very few attempts to explain why they rushed to their defence. Those who did concentrated on explaining the Truman Doctrine, the Domino Effect and the involvement of the United Nations in the war.

Topic 5

- 14** There were some excellent analytical answers to this question which focussed on 'the importance' of Sputnik 1 in the arms and space race. These answers normally explained the superiority of the USA before 1957 supporting their answers with knowledge of the early development of nuclear weapons, explaining how Sputnik 1 changed the balance of power in the use of these weapons or even taking their answer up to 1969 and commenting on the response of the USA to Sputnik 1.

Topic 6

- 17** There were very few answers to this question, but those who attempted it normally did well, concentrating on the part played by Gorbachev's policies, the demonstrations in Berlin and the unpopularity of Honecker.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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