

Exam style question

This is the sort of question you will find appearing on the examination paper as a Section A question:

'The political establishment in Germany succeeded in maintaining the political status quo through a policy of moderate reform.'

How far do you agree with this judgement?

Exam tips**The plan**

A properly thought through plan is the key to success. In completing the plan you can fully think through your ideas and prepare yourself for completion of the response. In the plan you directly answer the question, using the words in the question. The purpose of the plan is for you to work out in your mind the argument in response to the question.

- The plan should take the form of two or three lines/strands of your argument.
- It is critical that the lines of argument in your plan refer to or cover all of the main issues.
- You then should very briefly highlight what you are going to put in each paragraph as a list of key sections and key points.

Writing analytically

In answering the question set you must ensure that:

- your answer is analytical throughout
- you show an explicit understanding of the chosen factors – you will be credited for pursuing those issues that need to be addressed in relation to the set question
- a wide range of detail is precisely selected and used in your answer to support a developed evaluation of the issues – you will be credited for what you have found out in terms of the content relevant to the topic
- you engage with the stated factor for at least the first third of the essay – you should measure the stated factor against other factors, weighing the factors against each other
- you engage with other factors in your essay, using these factors to set up a *debate* – top marks are awarded to candidates who can show that they can really get inside the debate
- your essay has a substantial conclusion – in your conclusion you should weigh the evidence one last time, judge how each piece of evidence stacks up against other pieces of evidence and make judgements on the basis of the evidence.

Structuring a response

Marks are easily thrown away because your essay technique is not as strong as it should be. The aim of this section is to give you guidance on how to write an assignment that is analytical throughout.

Introduction Once you have written a plan you need to write an introduction that answers the question and defines the key terms.

- The introduction involves writing out the main points from the plan.
- It is essential that you attack the question directly in the introduction.
- Your introduction should be straightforward, direct and should deliver an answer to the question.

Paragraph structure You need to structure your assignment into clear and sufficient paragraphs. To achieve the mark you want, you need to stay direct to the argument throughout. This means that you must explicitly answer the question throughout the essay. The best structure for every paragraph is thus:

- **Argue** At the start of the paragraph you should present a line of argument. The best way to do this is to use the language of argument:

One should argue that ...

It is clear that ...

Fundamentally ...

Without doubt ...

This most obviously ...

Try to avoid a descriptive start because this will often lead to a descriptive paragraph.

- **Explain** The next section of each paragraph will explain that line of argument.
- **Evidence** 'The clearest example of this point is the ...' The next section of the paragraph should give and explain the relevance of detail that you have used to back up your argument. This detail needs to be accurate, well selected and relevant. What is meant by detail? Facts, statistics, names, events, references to historians.
- **Reiterate** The last sentence of the paragraph should be a reiteration, going back to the main theme/argument in the question.

SKILLS BUILDER**1 What are the divisions?**

Halfway through the unit you started a spider diagram on which you plotted the divisions in Germany in the 1900 to 1914 period. After reading through the rest of the unit, finish that spider diagram off.

2 What has changed?

What changed in Germany between 1900 and 1914 and what stayed the same? Discuss this question with a work partner and see if you can list three points in each category.

RESEARCH TOPIC**Kaiser Wilhelm II**

Kaiser Wilhelm II is a character who interests historians for many reasons. Much has been made of his supposed psychological problems. Given the nature of the Prussian constitution, how much of an impact on German politics did the personality of the Kaiser have?

Using books, articles and the Internet, try to find out as much as you can about the Kaiser's personality. Then complete this assignment:

- To what extent was the course of Germany 1900–14 dictated by the personality of the Kaiser?