

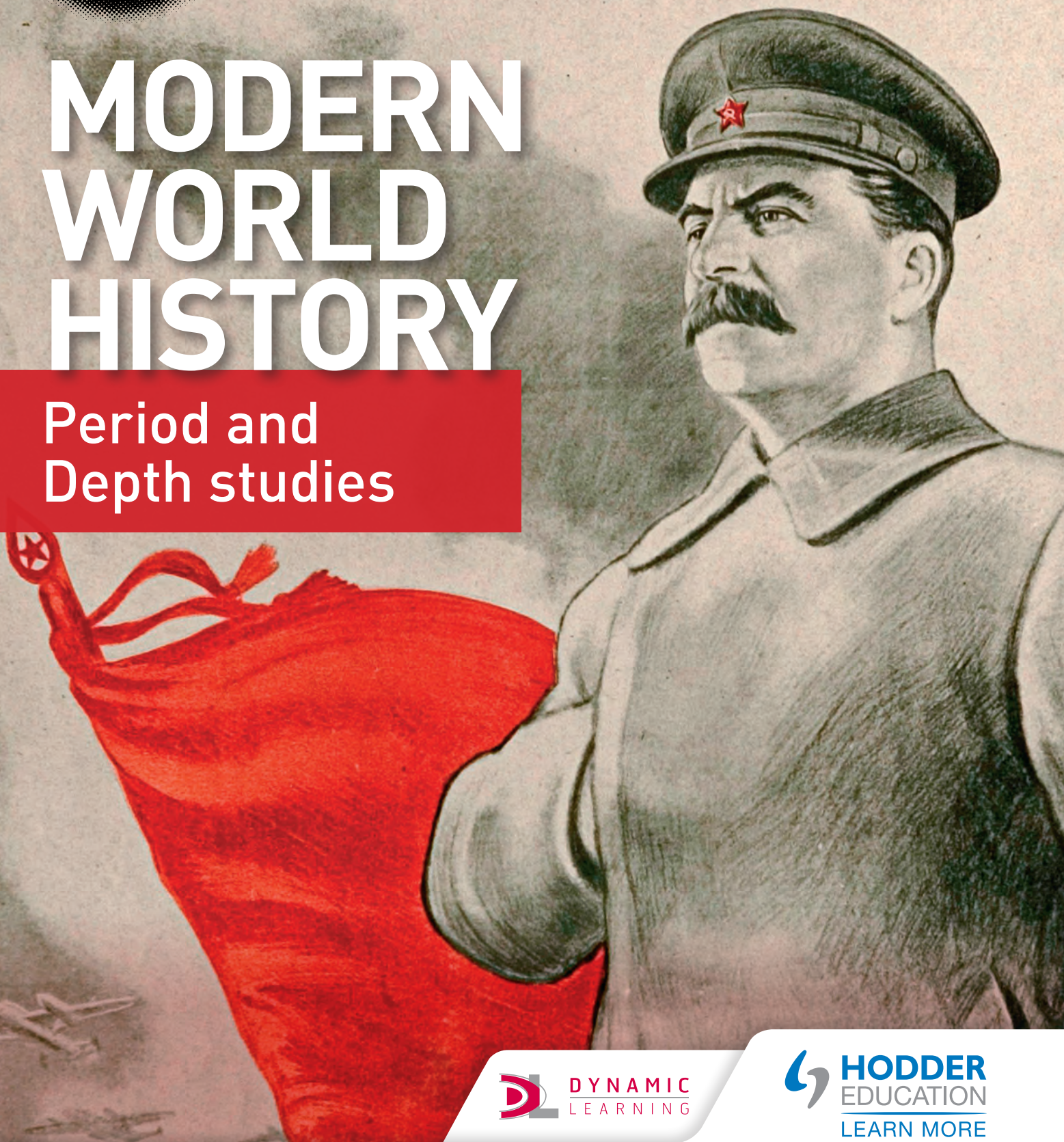
OCR
GCSE
HISTORY

EXPLAINING THE MODERN WORLD

BEN WALSH

MODERN WORLD HISTORY

Period and
Depth studies



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Prologue: The historian's mind-set

How historians work

If you think that history means reading a lot of information from a textbook and then memorising it, you are wrong. If you try to learn history in this way, you will probably end up feeling a bit like the picture above! Even historians get overwhelmed by the amount of historical information to be found in books, archives and other sources. They use a range of techniques to help them make sense of it all.

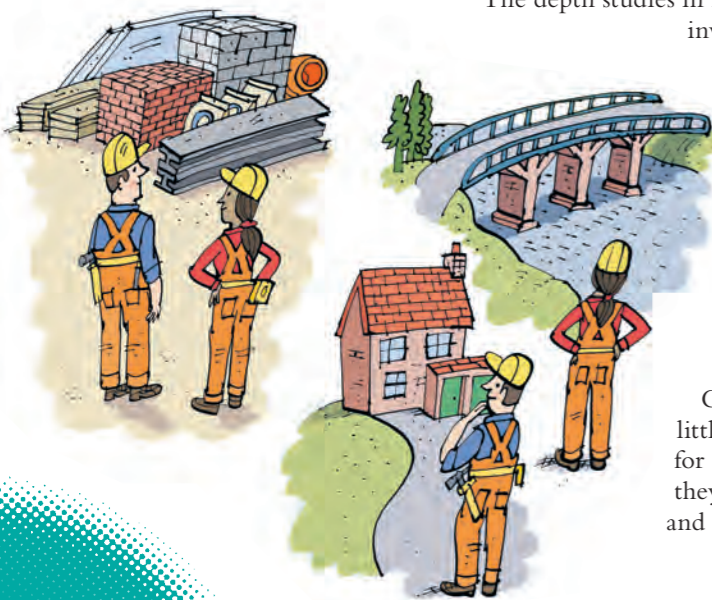
Focus

No historian can study every aspect of a period of history. To make the subject manageable, historians focus on particular areas. This book does the same – each of the studies focuses on selected parts of the story. The period study (Part 1) covers almost a century of history and focuses on political events and the relationships between countries. The depth studies in Part 2 focus closely on a particular country at a particular time, investigating the lives of ordinary people.

Ask questions

Historians are investigators rather than just collectors of information. They search for new information about the past in order to tackle important questions.

Historians have different interests. They do not all investigate the same questions. So when studying the Vietnam War, for example, Historian A may be most interested in why the Americans could not win the war, while Historian B concentrates on the war's impact on the USA. Historian C, investigating Nazi Germany in the 1930s, might want to know why the Nazis faced so little opposition, while Historian D is interested in what life was like for ordinary Germans at that time. A bit like two different builders, they use the same or similar materials but they ask different questions and tell different stories.



You will follow the same sort of process when preparing for your history exam. You need to learn the content of the specification, but you also need to practise *using this content* to answer important questions. The text in this book, as well as the Focus Tasks for each topic, are designed to help you think in this way.

Select

Another vital technique that historians use is selection. From all the material they study, historians must select just the parts that are relevant and useful to answer a question.

Selection is hard for a historian, but it may be even harder for you under the time pressure of an exam. You have learnt a lot of history facts and you want to show the examiner how much you know – but this is the wrong way of thinking. To begin with, you risk running out of time. Even more serious, you may end up not answering the question clearly because you have included things that are not relevant or helpful. Compare this process to a wardrobe full of clothes. You never wake up in the morning and put on every item of clothing you own! You choose what to wear depending on different factors:

- the weather
- what you will be doing that day (going to school, a wedding, a Saturday job, a sports match).



Organise

Once historians have selected the relevant information, they then have to choose what order to present it in to create a coherent argument. You must do the same. If you were responding to the question 'Why did the wartime allies fall out in the years 1945–48?', you need to do more than simply list all the reasons. You must build an argument that shows what you think is the most important reason. Listing all the events on either side of the Cold War does not necessarily explain why it happened. You need to link the events to the outcomes.



Fine tune

But don't stop there. Even the most skilled historians make mistakes when they write and you might, too. When you have finished writing, re-read your text and fine tune it to make it as clear and accurate as possible. When you are about to go out, what is the last thing you do before you leave the house? Check your hair? Check your make-up? That is fine tuning. It is a history skill too, and could make a real difference to how much an examiner enjoys reading what you write.

So remember:

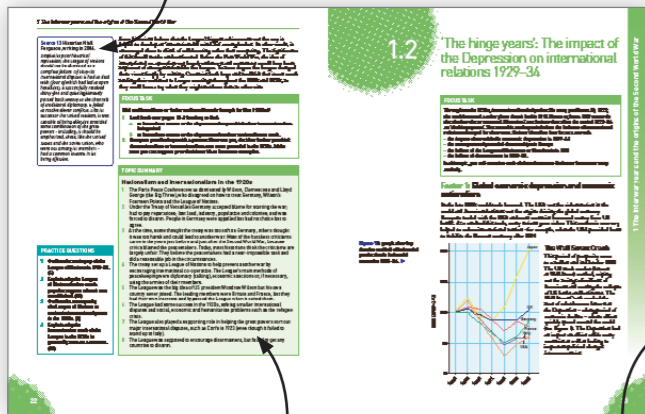
- focus
- ask questions
- select
- organise
- fine tune.

Keep these points in mind as you work through your course. Good luck!

Features of this book

Sources

These help you understand the story more clearly because they reveal what events and ideas meant to people at the time – what they said, did, wrote, sang, celebrated or got upset about. You will not be asked source-based questions in the period-study assessment, but sources are still an important element when studying the history of a period. In the depth study, sources are a key part of the assessment.

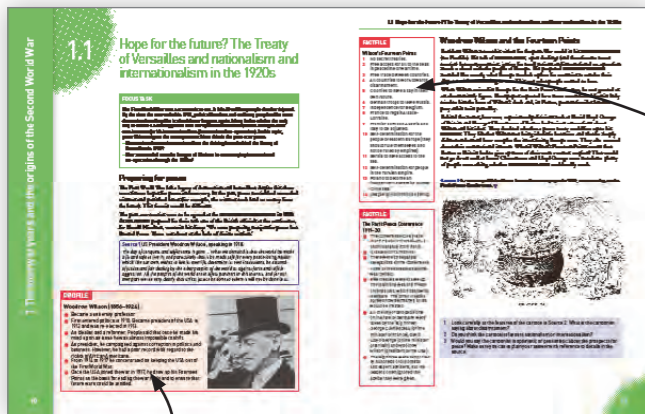


Topic summary

This appears at the end of every topic. It condenses the topic into a few points, which should help you get your bearings in even the most complicated content.

Margin questions

These useful little questions are designed to keep you on track. They usually focus in on a source or a section of text to make sure you have fully understood the important points in there.



Profile

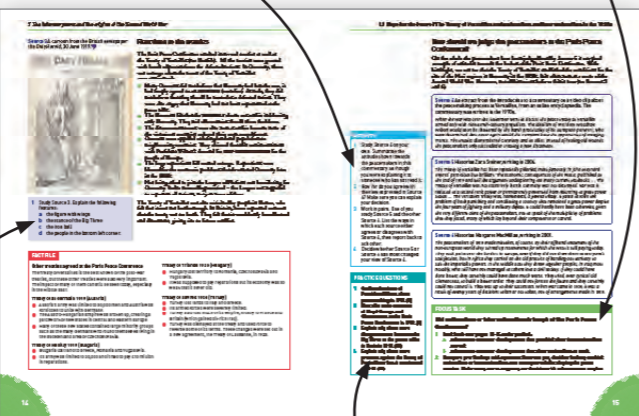
Profiles are essentially factfiles about people, summarising the key facts about a historical figure.

Activity

Activities are designed to help you think through a particular question or issue. The thinking you do in these tasks is usually a building block towards your answer to a Focus Task.

Focus task

Focus Tasks are the main tasks for really making sure you understand what you are studying. They will never ask you to just write something out, take notes or show basic comprehension. These tasks challenge you to show that you know relevant historical information and can use that information to develop an argument.



Practice questions

These questions come at the end of major sections. They are designed to help you think about the kinds of questions you may come across in your exam. We do not know the exact questions you will be asked, but we know the style of question. Usually we have shown you the marks that might be available to give you a sense of how much time to spend on it. These are explained in the Assessment Focus sections.

Factfile

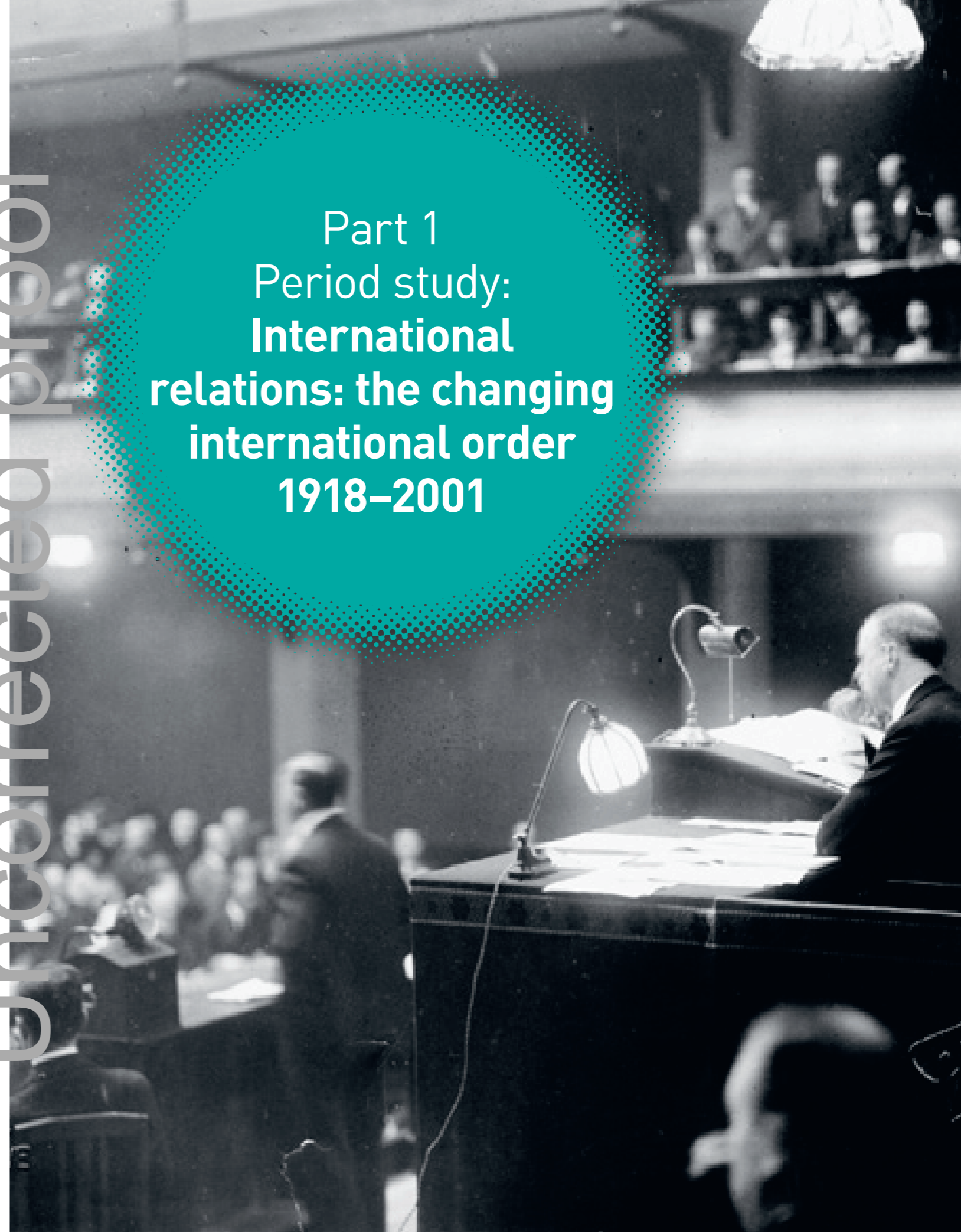
Factfiles are more or less what they say – files full of facts! These give you important background information to a story, without interrupting the narrative too much.

Assessment focus

This section takes you through the types of questions in the exam paper, how they are assessed and possible ways to answer them.

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Part 1 Period study: International relations: the changing international order 1918–2001



Explaining the modern world

The modern world is a big and complicated place, so explaining the modern world is a pretty tall order! In this course we cannot really explain every aspect of everything that is happening around the globe today. However, right now the world is facing many problems, and almost all of these can be better explained and understood if we know where they came from – their history. The map below highlights some of the most significant issues at the present time and how the history in this book can help you understand them.

Nationalist feeling in Europe

There are concerns that groups of people in some countries have developed a negative view of immigrants and are supporting nationalist anti-immigrant organisations. This is particularly strong in Britain, France and Germany – countries where large numbers of migrants from eastern Europe have settled in the hope of finding work. Tension has also arisen over the huge numbers of refugees fleeing to Europe from the war in Syria and Iraq. Many Europeans are concerned by the rise in nationalist feeling these events are causing. Nationalism was a key cause of both world wars (see Topics 1.1 and 1.3).

Russia

Russia's oil and gas reserves have made it a wealthy and influential country. It is becoming increasingly powerful on the world stage. In recent years, Russia has intervened in the affairs of neighbouring Ukraine, taking control of the region of Crimea and supporting anti-government rebels in eastern Ukraine. Russia has also shown it will not be ordered around by the USA or any other country. We can trace the roots of this attitude back to Russia's rivalry with the USA in the Cold War (see Chapters 2 and 3).



The USA

The USA is the world's greatest power – the wealthiest and most influential nation on Earth. However, at the moment it is struggling to recover from an economic depression, and history shows that economic depression often causes political problems (see Topic 1.2). The USA has also become bogged down in conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, just as it did in Vietnam in the 1960s (see Topic 2.2).

Crisis in Syria and Iraq

In recent times, Syria and neighbouring Iraq were both war zones, torn apart by different factions. There are many different armed groups but the largest and most powerful is Islamic State. This group has taken over from al-Qaeda as the main radical Islamist organisation. The roots of these problems can be found in two places. The first is the way that the Middle East was divided up after the First World War (see Topic 1.1). The second is in the role of Afghanistan in the Cold War (see Topic 2.2) and in the years that followed. The crisis in Syria and Iraq has created millions of refugees, many of whom are fleeing to Europe.

China

China has been referred to as a 'sleeping giant' in the first half of the twentieth century, but today it is a great global power. We can see the roots of China's rise in its relationship with the USA in the 1970s and 1980s in particular (see Topic 3.1). China now has the world's second-largest economy and it may soon overtake the USA to become number 1. How will the USA respond?

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Historians in action

In this course we want you to *think like a historian* – answering important questions, making judgements and using your knowledge and the available evidence to back them up. The text and tasks in this book will help you to reach judgements on questions such as:

How did Hitler's actions increase tensions in Europe in the period 1933–37?

Why did Ronald Reagan have such a big impact on superpower relations?

Why did al-Qaeda attack the USA in 2001?

However, one other really important step to thinking like a historian is to *study the work of other historians*. You will study two controversial historical issues:

Controversy 1: the policy of Appeasement

Controversy 2: the origins of the Cold War

Historians, politicians and ordinary people have disagreed (sometimes bitterly) about these issues. Interpretations have changed as new evidence has emerged and as new generations have challenged the views of the past. You will study *how* historians have interpreted them and also explain *why* historians have disagreed.

Why do interpretations differ?

Some people wonder why historians disagree and argue about the past. They say, 'The past is the past. Just tell me what happened!' In a way, they are right. There was a First World War, a League of Nations, an Adolf Hitler. There were wars in Vietnam in the 1960s and Afghanistan in the 1980s. We can discover a lot about these events from the many sources that survive. Historians agree on that. However, as soon as a historian starts trying to *explain* these things, they no longer simply record facts. They begin to put their own slant on events. They may choose to include some details while leaving out others. They will tell a version of the story that is influenced not only by the sources they have studied but also by their own views and experiences.

Once a historian has told their story, it is out there to be read by others – who might disagree, carry out further research and then write their own version of events. And so it goes, step by step, historian by historian. Our understanding of the past is gradually refined until we get close to what we are all seeking – the truth – while remaining aware that it is not the *whole* truth, only the closest we have come so far.

The problem of evidence

For some periods of history the problem is that we do not have much evidence. That is not a problem when studying the twentieth century, and particularly the subject of international relations. Quite the opposite in fact! There are literally millions (maybe even billions) of sources that can help our understanding and this is more than any person could study in a lifetime. This is why reinterpretation will carry on forever: there will always be something new to discover.

Welcome to the world of the historian!

1.1

Hope for the future? The Treaty of Versailles and nationalism and internationalism in the 1920s

FOCUS TASK

The First World War was a traumatic event. It left 40 million people dead or injured. By the time the war ended in 1918, political leaders and ordinary people alike were determined that nothing like it should ever happen again. Many believed that the only way to achieve a lasting peace was to replace nationalism (states acting in their own interests) with internationalism (international co-operation). In this topic, you will investigate the attempts to achieve this in the post-war years:

- Was nationalism or internationalism the driving force behind the Treaty of Versailles in 1919?
- How successful was the League of Nations in encouraging international co-operation through the 1920s?

Preparing for peace

The First World War left a legacy of destruction and hatred but despite this there were sincere hopes for peace and recovery. In the past, peace treaties had rewarded winners and punished losers (for example, the winners took land or money from the losers). This time it would be different.

The post-war treaties were to be agreed at the PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE in 1919. As DELEGATES prepared for their task one of the British officials at the conference, Sir Harold Nicolson, wrote in his diary: 'We were preparing not just for peace but Eternal Peace. There was about us the halo of divine mission.'

Source 1 US President Woodrow Wilson, speaking in 1918.

The day of conquest and self-interest is gone. ... What we demand is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression. All the peoples of the world are in effect partners in this interest, and for our own part we see very clearly that unless justice be done to others it will not be done to us.

PROFILE

Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924)

- Became a university professor.
- First entered politics in 1910. Became president of the USA in 1912 and was re-elected in 1916.
- An idealist and a reformer. People said that once he made his mind up on an issue he was almost impossible to shift.
- As president, he campaigned against corruption in politics and business. However, he had a poor record with regard to the rights of African Americans.
- From 1914 to 1917 he concentrated on keeping the USA out of the First World War.
- Once the USA joined the war in 1917, he drew up his Fourteen Points as the basis for ending the war fairly and to ensure that future wars could be avoided.



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FACTFILE

Wilson's Fourteen Points

- 1 No secret treaties.
- 2 Free access for all to the seas in peacetime or wartime.
- 3 Free trade between countries.
- 4 All countries to work towards disarmament.
- 5 Colonies to have a say in their own future.
- 6 German troops to leave Russia.
- 7 Independence for Belgium.
- 8 France to regain Alsace-Lorraine.
- 9 Frontier between Austria and Italy to be adjusted.
- 10 Self-determination for the people of eastern Europe (they should rule themselves and not be ruled by empires).
- 11 Serbia to have access to the sea.
- 12 Self-determination for people in the Turkish Empire.
- 13 Poland to become an independent state with access to the sea.
- 14 League of Nations to be set up.

FACTFILE

The Paris Peace Conference 1919–20

- The Conference took place in the Palace of Versailles, a short distance from Paris.
- It lasted for 12 months.
- There were 27 separate delegations at the Conference. None of the defeated nations was invited.
- Five treaties were drawn up. The main one was the Treaty of Versailles, which dealt with Germany. The other treaties agreed how Germany's allies would be treated.
- All the important decisions on the fate of Germany were taken by the 'Big Three': George Clemenceau (prime minister of France), David Lloyd George (prime minister of Britain) and Woodrow Wilson (president of the USA).
- The Big Three were supported by hundreds of diplomats and expert advisers, but the leaders often ignored the advice they were given.

Woodrow Wilson and the Fourteen Points

President Wilson set out his vision for the post-war world in his FOURTEEN POINTS (see Factfile). His talk of DISARMAMENT, open dealings (and therefore no secret treaties) between countries, justice for small nations and international co-operation struck a chord with the people of Europe. His proposed LEAGUE OF NATIONS sounded like exactly what Europe needed: a place for countries to resolve their disputes without resorting to war. This was what people wanted to hear.

When Wilson arrived in Europe for the Paris Peace Conference, he was greeted as an almost saintly figure. Newspapers reported how some wounded soldiers in Italy tried to kiss the hem of Wilson's cloak and, in France, peasant families knelt to pray as his train passed by.

Behind the scenes, however, experienced politicians such as David Lloyd George of Britain and Georges Clemenceau of France had serious reservations about Wilson and his ideas. They doubted whether a peace treaty could live up to his RHETORIC. They felt that Wilson not being idealistic but naive and that he simply did not understand how complex the issues facing Europe were. They also worried about their own national interest. What if Wilson's Fourteen Points meant that France or Britain had to give up some of their own overseas empires? That would not go down well at home! Clemenceau and Lloyd George were not alone: plenty of people were asking whether INTERNATIONALISM could really work.

Source 2 A cartoon published in an Australian newspaper in 1919, commenting on the Paris Peace Conference. ▼



- 1 Look carefully at the features of the cartoon in Source 2. What is the cartoonist saying about disarmament?
- 2 Do you think the cartoonist favours nationalism or internationalism?
- 3 Would you say the cartoonist is optimistic or pessimistic about the prospects for peace? Make sure you can explain your answer with reference to details in the source.

Internationalism vs nationalism at the Paris Peace Conference

In Wilson's vision of the new world, all the delegates were supposed to discuss and agree major issues such as borders and REPARATIONS. In practice, this proved too complicated. Wilson quickly abandoned this principle and the BIG THREE ended up making the main decisions. However, even that proved difficult.

Clemenceau clashed with Wilson over many issues but particularly on **how to treat Germany**. Wilson wanted Germany punished, but not too harshly. He hoped to see a democratic state emerge there. He feared that a harsh settlement would leave Germany wanting revenge. But France shared a border with Germany and Clemenceau wanted to make sure his own country would be secure from any future German threat. Even in defeat Germany had a larger, younger population than France, and a stronger economy. The French people were also demanding that Germany was harshly punished for their pain and suffering. In the end, Wilson gave way to Clemenceau on many issues relating to Germany.



Wilson and Lloyd George did not always agree either. Lloyd George was particularly unhappy with point 2 of the Fourteen Points, which allowed **all nations access to the seas**. Similarly, Wilson's views on **self-determination** seemed a potential threat if such ideas were to spread to the British Empire.



Clemenceau also clashed with Lloyd George on **how to treat Germany**. Like Wilson, Lloyd George wanted Germany to recover swiftly from the war, although he had different reasons. He wanted an economically strong Germany so it could pay Britain compensation for war damage. Germany could also be a valuable trading partner for Britain in peacetime. However, Lloyd George did not want Germany to keep its navy and its colonies, which would be a threat to Britain and its empire. Clemenceau felt that the British were inconsistent: generous to Germany when it suited them; tough when it was against their national interests.

Clemenceau and Lloyd George did give Wilson what he wanted in **eastern Europe**, despite their reservations about self-determination. The worry here was that there were so many people of different ethnic origins in different regions, it was almost impossible to create a state that would not have some minority groups in it. This issue affected the other four treaties much more than it did the TREATY OF VERSAILLES.

FOCUS TASK

Work in threes. Each one of you is one of the Big Three.

- Write a short paragraph about each of the other two showing what you think of them. Here are some words you might want to include: naive, arrogant, obstinate, idealistic, unrealistic, cynical, practical, confused.
- Now show your paragraphs to the other two members of your group and defend what you have said about them.

FACTFILE

The Treaty of Versailles

The Big Three co-operated enough to draw up the Treaty of Versailles, but none of them was completely happy with the terms of the treaty. After months of negotiation, each of them had to compromise on some of their aims.

1 War guilt

Germany had to accept the blame for starting the war. The Germans felt this was extremely unfair.

2 Reparations

Germany was forced to pay reparations to the Allies for war damage. The exact figure was debated for some time and announced in 1921. It was set at £6.6 billion. If the terms had not later been changed, Germany would not have finished paying until 1984.

3 Land

a) Germany's European borders were changed so it lost land to neighbouring countries (see map). The result was that Germany lost 10 per cent of its land and 12.5 per cent of its population. The treaty also forbade Germany to form a union (*Anschluss*) with its former ally Austria.

b) Germany also lost its overseas empire. This had been one cause of bad relations between Britain and Germany before the war. Former German colonies became mandates controlled by the League of Nations (which effectively meant that they came under the control of France or Britain).

4 Armed forces

The size and power of the German army was a major concern, especially for France. The treaty reduced German forces to well below their pre-war levels:

- The army was limited to 100,000 men and conscription was banned – soldiers had to be volunteers.
- Germany was not allowed armoured vehicles, submarines or aircraft.
- The navy could have only six battleships.
- The Rhineland (the border area between Germany and France) was demilitarised – no German troops were allowed there (see the pink area on the map).

5 League of Nations

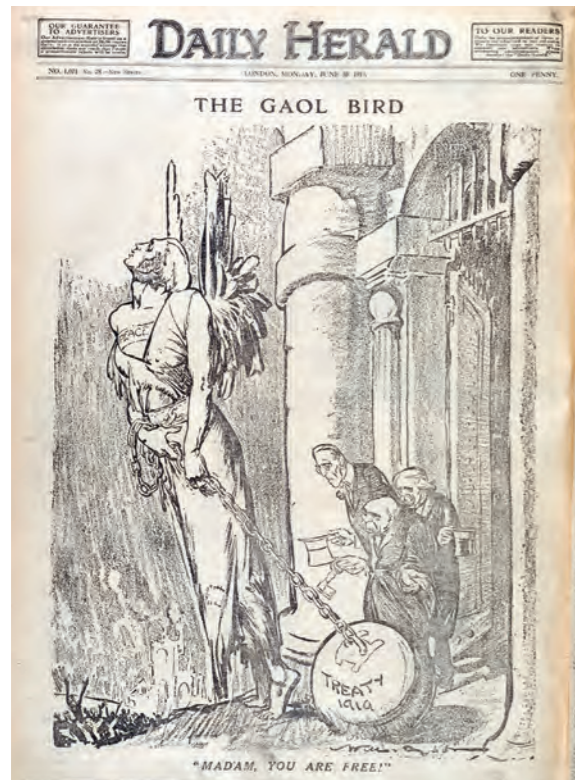
Previous methods of keeping peace had failed and so the League of Nations was set up as an international 'police force'. Germany would not be allowed to join the League until it had proved its peaceful intentions.

A map showing the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on the borders of Europe. ▼



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Source 3 A cartoon from the British newspaper the *Daily Herald*, 30 June 1919. ▼



- 1 Study Source 3. Explain the following features:
 - a the figure with wings
 - b the stance of the Big Three
 - c the iron ball
 - d the people in the bottom left corner.

FACTFILE

Other treaties agreed at the Paris Peace Conference

The Treaty of Versailles is the best known of the post-war treaties, but these other treaties were also very important. The impact of many of them can still be seen today, especially in the Middle East.

Treaty of St Germain 1919 (Austria)

- Austria's army was limited to 30,000 men and Austria was forbidden to unite with Germany.
- The Austro-Hungarian Empire was broken up, creating a patchwork of new states in central and eastern Europe.
- Many of these new states contained large minority groups such as the many Germans who found themselves living in the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia.

Treaty of Neuilly 1919 (Bulgaria)

- Bulgaria lost land to Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia.
- Its army was limited to 20,000 and it had to pay £10 million in reparations.

Reactions to the treaties

The Paris Peace Conference resulted in several treaties as well as the Treaty of Versailles (see Factfile). All the treaties were greeted with howls of protest from the defeated nations. In Germany, there was outrage when the terms of the Treaty of Versailles were announced:

- Many Germans did not believe that Germany had lost the war, it had simply agreed to an ARMISTICE (ceasefire). As such, they did not believe that they should be treated as a defeated nation. They were also angry that Germany had not been represented at the peace talks.
- The Germans felt that the WAR GUILT clause was unfair in blaming only Germany. They said that all countries should share the blame.
- The disarmament terms were also seen as unfair because none of the victorious countries reduced their own armed forces.
- Germans were appalled at losing land and population to neighbouring countries. They claimed that this was inconsistent with President Wilson's demand for SELF-DETERMINATION for the people of Europe.
- The huge reparations bill caused outrage. Reparations were blamed for the economic problems that devastated Germany later in the 1920s.
- Not being asked to join the League of Nations was humiliating for Germany. It also seemed hypocritical – the League was supposed to represent all nations, not just some of them.

The Treaty of Versailles was also criticised by people in France, who felt that it was not harsh enough. In Britain, some expressed concern that the treaty was *too* harsh. They felt that it would only breed hatred and discontent, giving rise to future conflict.

Treaty of Trianon 1920 (Hungary)

- Hungary lost territory to Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.
- It was supposed to pay reparations but its economy was so weak that it never did.

Treaty of Sèvres 1920 (Turkey)

- Turkey lost lands to Italy and Greece.
- Its armed forces were severely limited.
- Turkey also lost much of its empire, mostly to France and Britain (which gained oil-rich Iraq).
- Turkey was dismayed at the treaty and used force to reverse some of its terms. These changes were set out in a new agreement, the Treaty of Lausanne, in 1923.

How should we judge the peacemakers at the Paris Peace Conference?

On the whole the peacemakers have been judged harshly. Source 4 is a typical example of attitudes towards the leaders at the Paris Peace Conference. With hindsight, we can see that the Treaty of Versailles established the conditions for the rise of the Nazi regime in Germany in the 1930s. It is often seen as a cause of the Second World War. However, not all historians believe this is true (see Sources 5 and 6).

Source 4 An extract from the introduction to a commentary on a video clip about the peacemaking process at Versailles, from an online encyclopaedia. The commentary was written in the 1970s.

When the war was over the statesmen went to discuss the peace treaty at Versailles armed only with nineteenth-century prejudices. The idealism of President Woodrow Wilson would soon be shattered by the harsh practicality of his European partners, who were determined that never again would the Germans have the opportunity of ravaging France. The treaties dismembered Germany and its allies. Instead of healing old wounds the peacemakers only succeeded in creating a new discontent.

ACTIVITY

- 1 Study Source 4 on your own. Summarise the attitude shown towards the peacemakers in this commentary as though you were explaining it to someone who has not read it.
- 2 How far do you agree with the view expressed in Source 4? Make sure you can explain your decision.
- 3 Work in pairs. One of you study Source 5 and the other Source 6. List the ways in which each source either agrees or disagrees with Source 4, then report back to each other.
- 4 Decide whether Source 5 or Source 6 has most changed your view of Source 4.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 1 Outline the views of President Wilson about peacemaking in 1919. (5)
- 2 Describe the main concerns of Lloyd George and Clemenceau at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. (5)
- 3 Explain why there were disagreements between the Big Three at the peace talks in Paris in 1919. (10)
- 4 Explain why there were protests against the Treaty of Versailles when it was issued in 1919. (10)

Source 5 Historian Zara Steiner, writing in 2004.

The Treaty of Versailles has been repeatedly pilloried, most famously in John Maynard Keynes' pernicious but brilliant 'The Economic Consequences of the Peace', published at the end of 1919 and still the argument underpinning too many current textbooks. ... The Treaty of Versailles was not excessively harsh. Germany was not destroyed. Nor was it reduced to a second rank power or permanently prevented from returning to great power status. ... The Versailles Treaty was, nonetheless, a flawed treaty. It failed to solve the problem of both punishing and conciliating a country that remained a great power despite the four years of fighting and a military defeat. It could hardly have been otherwise, given the very different aims of the peacemakers, not to speak of the multiplicity of problems that they faced, many of which lay beyond their competence or control.

Source 6 Historian Margaret MacMillan, writing in 2001.

The peacemakers of 1919 made mistakes, of course. By their offhand treatment of the non-European world they stirred up resentments for which the West is still paying today. They took pains over the borders in Europe, even if they did not draw them to everyone's satisfaction, but in Africa they carried on the old practice of handing out territory to suit the imperialist powers. In the Middle East they threw together peoples, in Iraq most notably, who still have not managed to cohere into a civil society. If they could have done better, they certainly could have done much worse. They tried, even cynical old Clemenceau, to build a better order. They could not foresee the future and they certainly could not control it. That was up to their successors. When war came in 1939, it was a result of twenty years of decisions taken or not taken, not of arrangements made in 1919.

FOCUS TASK

Did nationalism or internationalism triumph at the Paris Peace Conference?

- 1 Look back over pages 10–15 and try to find:
 - a at least two events or developments that you think show internationalism at work
 - b at least two events or developments that show nationalism at work.
- 2 Compare your findings with a partner. Between you, decide whether you think nationalism or internationalism was more powerful in shaping the peace treaties. Make sure you can support your decision with at least two examples.

The League of Nations: internationalism in action in the 1920s

The most significant method of international co-operation in the post-war world was the League of Nations. The idea of an organisation like this had been around for some time, but it was President Wilson who really championed it. The single most important aim of the League was to solve international disputes without going to war. This was reflected in the COVENANT signed by all members (see Source 7).

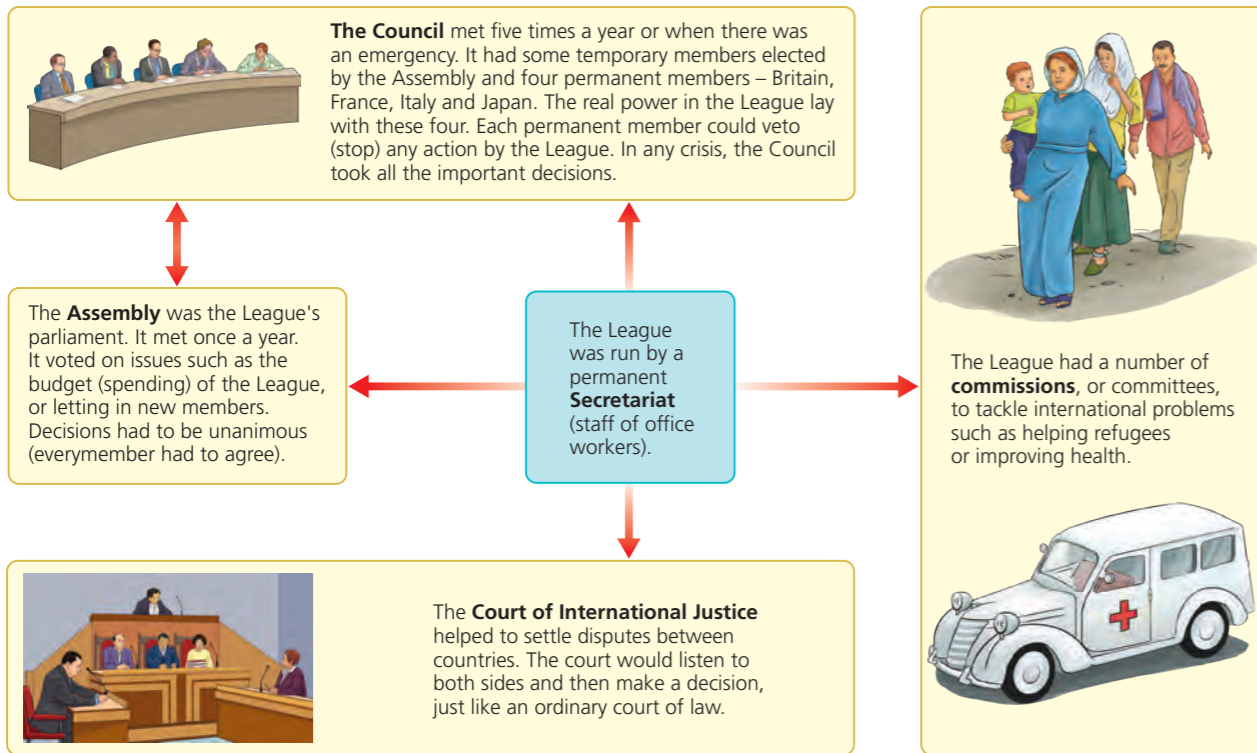
- 1 Study Source 7. Explain why the covenant would have been popular and made people optimistic.
- 2 Imagine you are living in 1920. You are wondering how the League will perform. Using Source 7 and the Factfile, what would you say were its strengths and weaknesses?

Source 7 The introduction to the Covenant of the League of Nations.
 THE HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES, in order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security, agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations

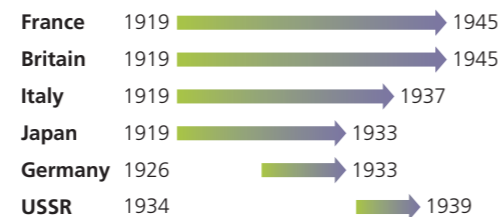
- by promising not to go to war
- by agreeing to open, just and honourable relations between nations
- by agreeing that governments should act according to international law
- by maintaining justice and respect for all treaty obligations.

FACTFILE

How the League of Nations was organised.



The League began with 42 member nations. By 1939, there were over 50 members. But some powerful nations left the League and others, most notably the USA never joined. The strongest influences were



Uncorrected proof

Wilson's vision

Once again Wilson raised expectations. He wanted the League of Nations to be like a world parliament, where representatives of all nations met regularly to solve problems. This was what people wanted to hear after the horrors of the war. All the major countries would join, binding themselves to the League's covenant. They would disarm. If they had a dispute with another country, they would take it to the League and accept its decisions.

League members would also promise to protect one another if attacked (this was called COLLECTIVE SECURITY). If any member broke the covenant and went to war illegally, other members would impose ECONOMIC SANCTIONS (i.e. they would stop trading with that country). Supporters of the League were particularly excited by this new weapon of economic sanctions. They believed it could be a powerful way of containing aggression without resorting to war. As a last resort, the League could take military action against an aggressor nation.

Doubts and reservations

Not all the leaders of the major powers were convinced by Wilson's vision for the League of Nations. Lloyd George wanted a simpler organisation that met only in emergencies. In fact, a body like this already existed, called the CONFERENCE OF AMBASSADORS. Lloyd George was also determined that membership of the League would not commit Britain to take certain actions in emergencies – he wanted Britain to be free to act in its own interests. Clemenceau was also sceptical about the League. Like Lloyd George, he wanted his country to be free to act independently. The French leader also thought that the League needed its own army to achieve anything.

Although the League of Nations had been US President Wilson's idea, the United States could not join it unless the US Congress agreed. In March 1920, after almost a year of debate, Congress refused. By that time, however, the League of Nations had officially opened for business, so it was left to Britain and France to take the lead in trying to make it work.

- 3 Match these visions for the League of Nations to each of the Big Three (Wilson, Lloyd George or Clemenceau):
 - a a strong body with its own army
 - a world parliament with regular meetings
 - a simple group to meet when there was an emergency.
- 4 Study Source 8. How can you tell that the cartoonist had doubts about the League?
- 5 How do you know that the cartoonist who created Source 9 is hostile to the League?

Source 8 A cartoon from the magazine *Punch*, March 1919. ▼



Source 9 A Russian cartoon from 1919, commenting on the plans for the League of Nations. The caption reads: 'The League of Nations: Capitalists of all countries, unite!' ▼



The work of the League's commissions

The League's commissions worked hard to solve problems left over from the war. They were driven by a desire to make life better for ordinary people, but also by the belief that social problems and poverty were a cause of international tension. If these issues could be solved, future wars may be prevented.

The League did not employ its own experts. Instead, lawyers, trade unionists and financial experts from member countries came together and co-operated under the 'umbrella' of the League's organisation. This was internationalism in action to improve people's lives.

In the 1920s, the League's commissions made several important achievements:

- The **Refugee Committee** helped an estimated 400,000 people who had been displaced by the war or made prisoners of war return to their homes.
- The **International Labour Organisation** successfully campaigned for workers' rights – especially for women and children – in all countries.

- The League brought in the first **Declaration of the Rights of the Child**, which is still in force today.
- The **Health Committee** funded research into deadly diseases, developing vaccines against leprosy and malaria. The League also fought successful campaigns against **DRUG TRAFFICKING** and slavery. For example, it was responsible for freeing the 200,000 slaves in British-owned Sierra Leone.
- Another area of achievement was in finance. For example, in 1922–23 the **ECONOMIES** of Austria and Hungary collapsed. In response, the League's **Financial Committee** came up with an economic plan to raise loans and help these two economies recover.

A place to talk

The League also became a meeting place for experts in science, finance, law and health care, and for activists in women's and children's rights, working conditions and anti-slavery. Today, these groups might share information and ideas using the internet, but in the 1920s the League's commissions provided an important place for people to exchange ideas and introduce improvements.

Legacy

Even after the League was replaced by the United Nations in 1945, several League commissions were kept on because they were so valuable. For example, the International Labour Organization still operates today. The League's Health Committee is now the United Nations' World Health Organization and the financial planning done by the Financial Committee was the basis of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

- 1 Study Source 11. This photograph was published in different newspapers in many countries. Do you think the different newspapers would have put the same caption on the picture? Explain your answer.
- 2 Compare Sources 10 and 11. If you were producing a booklet promoting the League of Nations, which of these two images would you choose for the cover? Explain your answer.

Source 10 The League Committee on Economic Questions, meeting in the 1920s. This was an official League of Nations' photograph. ▼



Source 11 The celebrations marking the opening of the League of Nations, January 1920. ▲

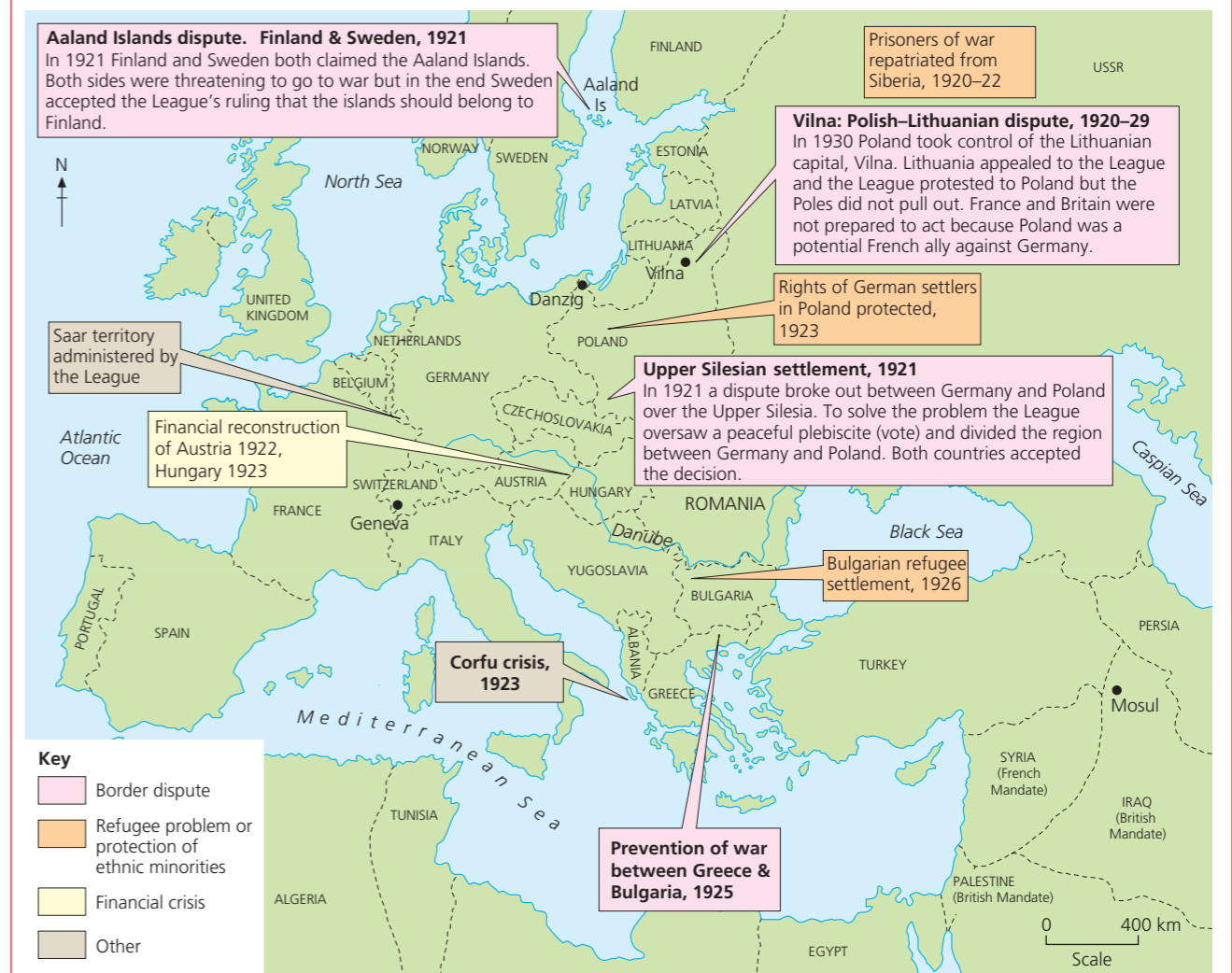
The League of Nations and international security

Despite the achievements of its commissions, the League was always going to be judged primarily on whether it could prevent war between member nations. Many countries faced severe financial problems due to the cost of the war. In addition, the peace treaties themselves created a whole new set of problems. For example, redrawing the borders of a country on a map was easy enough, but making this work in practical terms was much more difficult. The defeated nations despised the terms of the treaties, but it was the League's job to enforce these terms.

So how well did the League do? The Factfile shows just a few of the 66 disputes dealt with by the League in the 1920s and summarises what happened in some of the border disputes. Next, you will look at two disputes in more detail: Corfu and Bulgaria.

FACTFILE

A map showing the problems dealt with by the League of Nations in the 1920s.



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Corfu 1923

One of the borders that had to be decided after the war was between Greece and Albania. The Conference of Ambassadors was tasked with deciding where the border should be and it appointed an Italian general, Enrico Tellini, to supervise it. On 27 August 1923, while surveying the Greek side of the frontier area, Tellini and his team were ambushed and killed. The Italian leader Benito Mussolini was furious. He blamed the Greek government for the murder and demanded that Greece pay compensation to Italy and execute the murderers. When the Greek government refused to meet all of Italy's demands, Mussolini attacked and occupied the Greek island of Corfu. Fifteen people were killed. This attack violated the covenant, and Greece appealed to the League for help. The League condemned Mussolini's actions. However, it also suggested that Greece pay Italy the compensation.

Mussolini refused to let the matter rest. He claimed the Council of the League was not competent to deal with the issue and insisted that it should be decided by the Conference of Ambassadors. If Britain and France had stood together, Mussolini would probably have failed. However, the two leading League nations could not agree. Records from meetings of the British government show that they did not support Italy in the matter and were prepared to intervene to force Mussolini out of Corfu. The French backed Italy – probably because they were dealing with an issue in the RUHR region of Germany at the time, so they did not have the resources to support an armed intervention against Italy.

In the end Mussolini got his way. The Council of Ambassadors ruled that the Greeks must apologise and pay compensation directly to Italy. On 27 September, Mussolini withdrew from Corfu, boasting of his triumph. There was much anger in the League over the Conference of Ambassadors' actions, but the ruling was never overturned.

Bulgaria 1925

In October 1925, some Greek soldiers were killed on the border with Bulgaria. Greek troops invaded and Bulgaria appealed to the League for help. The League demanded that both sides stand down and told Greek forces to withdraw from Bulgaria. Britain and France backed the League's judgement (it is worth remembering they were negotiating the LOCARNO TREATIES at the same time, see opposite). Greece obeyed, but pointed out that there seemed to be one rule for large states such as Italy and another for smaller ones such as themselves. The outcome of the incident was seen as a major success for the League, and optimism about its effectiveness soared. However, the main reason the League succeeded in this case was because the great powers were united in their decision.

1 'The main problem in the Corfu crisis was not the way the League worked, but the attitudes and actions of its own members.' Explain whether or not you agree with this statement.

FOCUS TASK

Internationalism vs nationalism in the 1920s

Look at the events and disputes on pages 18–20 then copy and complete the table below. You may decide that some disputes show examples of both internationalism

(international co-operation) and nationalism (states putting their own interests first).

Dispute	Problem (who was involved and what they did)	Response (action taken by League, states or other organisations to solve problem)	Success for internationalism? (your judgement on whether nationalism or internationalism triumphed, with reasons)

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Disarmament

All the peace treaties stated that nations should disarm and it was the League's role to make sure that they did. However, throughout the 1920s it largely failed in this aim. At the Washington Conference in 1921, the USA, Japan, Britain and France agreed to limit the size of their navies, but that was as far as disarmament ever got. This failure was particularly damaging to the League's reputation in Germany. Germany had disarmed – it had been forced to – but no one else did so to the same extent.

Source 12 A cartoon published in a British newspaper in December 1928. The caption reads: 'Peace (sadly): This looks very like the point we started from.' ▶



2 According to the cartoon (Source 12), how much progress has been made on disarmament? What details in the cartoon led you to this conclusion?

International agreements in the 1920s

Although disarmament failed, the major powers did work together to reach several agreements that seemed to make the world a safer and more secure place:

- **Rapallo Treaty (1922):** The USSR and Germany re-established diplomatic relations.
- **Dawes Plan (1924):** To avert an economic crisis in Germany, the USA lent it the money it needed to honour its reparations. These loans propped up the German economy and restored prosperity to the country in the mid-1920s.
- **Locarno Treaties (1925):** Germany accepted its western borders as set out in the Treaty of Versailles. This decision was greeted with great enthusiasm, especially in France, and it paved the way for Germany to join the League of Nations. However, nothing was said about Germany's eastern borders with Poland and Czechoslovakia. These states remained nervous about Germany.
- **Kellogg–Briand Pact (1928):** The official name for this was the 'General Treaty for Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy' (also known as the 'Pact of Paris'). It was an agreement between 65 nations not to use force to settle disputes.
- **Young Plan (1929):** Reduced the total amount of German reparations..

So was the League of Nations irrelevant in the 1920s?

Each of these agreements was worked out by groups of countries working together rather than by the League of Nations, but this does not mean that the League was irrelevant. As long as such agreements were reached, it did not care whether or not it was involved. There is no doubt that during the 1920s the League was accepted as *one* of the ways in which international disputes were resolved, even if it was not the *only* way. Historian Zara Steiner has said that 'the League was very effective in handling the "small change" of international diplomacy'.

Source 13 Historian Niall Ferguson, writing in 2006.

Despite its poor historical reputation, the League of Nations should not be dismissed as a complete failure. Of sixty-six international disputes it had to deal with (four of which had led to open hostilities), it successfully resolved thirty-five and quite legitimately passed back twenty to the channels of traditional diplomacy. It failed to resolve eleven conflicts. Like its successor the United Nations, it was capable of being effective provided some combination of the great powers – including, it should be emphasized, those, like the United States and the Soviet Union, who were not among its members – had a common interest in its being effective.

Some historians believe that the League's biggest achievement was the way it helped to develop an 'internationalist mind-set' among leaders. In other words, it encouraged them to think of collaborating rather than competing. The significance of this should not be underestimated. Before the First World War, the idea of international co-operation was largely unknown and most states would have been suspicious of an organisation like the League. To some degree the League changed these views simply by existing. Countries both large and small felt that it was worth sending their ministers to League meetings throughout the 1920s and 1930s, so they could have a say when they might not have done so otherwise.

FOCUS TASK**Did nationalism or internationalism triumph in the 1920s?**

- Look back over pages 18–21 and try to find:
 - at least three events or developments that you think show internationalism being tried
 - at least three events or developments that show nationalism at work.
- Compare your findings with a partner. Between you, decide whether you think that nationalism or internationalism was more powerful in the 1920s. Make sure you can support your decision with at least two examples.

TOPIC SUMMARY**Nationalism and internationalism in the 1920s**

- The Paris Peace Conference was dominated by Wilson, Clemenceau and Lloyd George (the Big Three), who disagreed on how to treat Germany, Wilson's Fourteen Points and the League of Nations.
- Under the Treaty of Versailles Germany accepted blame for starting the war; had to pay reparations; lost land, industry, population and colonies; and was forced to disarm. People in Germany were appalled but they had no choice but to agree.
- At the time, some thought the treaty was too soft on Germany, others thought it was too harsh and could lead to another war. Most of the harshest criticisms came in the years just before and just after the Second World War, because critics blamed the peacemakers. Today, most historians think the criticisms are largely unfair. They believe the peacemakers had a near-impossible task and did a reasonable job in the circumstances.
- The treaty set up a League of Nations to help prevent another war by encouraging international co-operation. The League's main methods of peacekeeping were diplomacy (talking), economic sanctions or, if necessary, using the armies of its members.
- The League was the big idea of US president Woodrow Wilson, but his own country never joined. The leading members were Britain and France, but they had their own interests and bypassed the League when it suited them.
- The League had some success in the 1920s, solving smaller international disputes and social, economic and humanitarian problems such as the refugee crisis.
- The League also played a supporting role in helping the great powers sort out major international disputes, such as Corfu in 1923 (even though it failed to stand up to Italy).
- The League was supposed to encourage disarmament, but failed to get any countries to disarm.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Outline the setting up of the League of Nations in 1919–20. (5)
- Explain why the League of Nations had so much popular support when it was established. (10)
- Outline the attempts by the League of Nations to maintain international peace in the 1920s. (5)
- Explain why the humanitarian work of the League in the 1920s is generally seen as a success. (10)

Uncorrected proof

1.2

'The hinge years': The impact of the Depression on international relations 1929–34**FOCUS TASK**

Throughout the 1920s, internationalism helped tackle many problems. By 1929, the world seemed a safer place than it had in 1919. However, from 1929 onwards the shadow of war returned. Historian Zara Steiner describes the period 1929–34 as 'the hinge years'. She sees this as the period when the balance of international relations changed for the worse. Steiner identifies four factors at work:

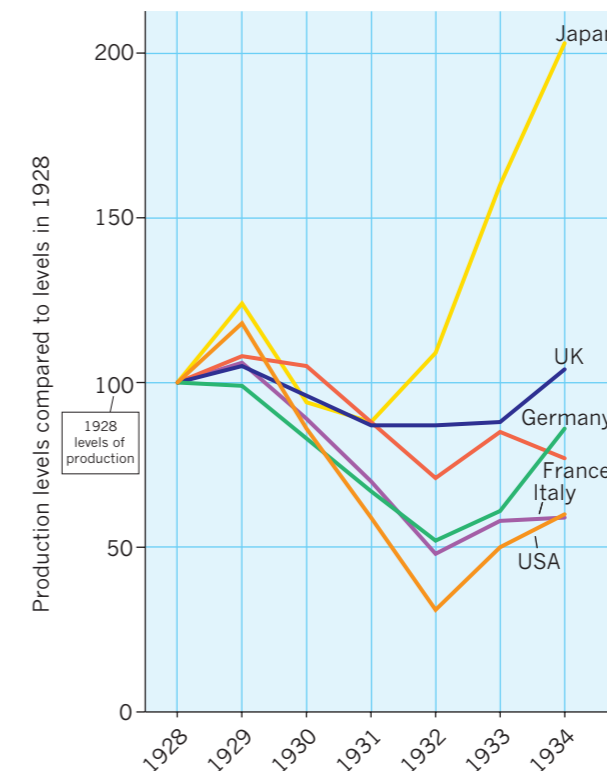
- the impact of a worldwide economic depression in 1929–34
- the emergence of powerful dictatorships in Europe
- the failure of the League of Nations over Manchuria in 1931
- the failure of disarmament in 1932–34.

In this topic, you will examine each of these factors to find out what went wrong and why.

Factor 1: Global economic depression and economic nationalism

In the late 1920s world trade boomed. The USA was the richest nation in the world and American business was the engine driving the global economy. Everyone traded with the USA and most countries borrowed money from US banks. As a result of this trade, many nations grew richer. This economic recovery helped to reduce international tension – for example, when the USA provided loans to stabilise the German economy after 1924.

Figure 1 A graph showing the rise and fall of industrial production in industrial countries 1928–34. ▶

**The Wall Street Crash**

This period of prosperity came to a sudden end in October 1929. The US stock market (known as Wall Street) crashed, wiping out the savings of millions of Americans and causing the collapse of US banks and businesses. The Wall Street Crash marked the start of what became known as the Great Depression – a long period of economic decline – whose effects quickly spread around the world (see Figure 1). The Depression had an impact on affairs *within* many countries as well as leading to important political changes *between* countries.

Economic nationalism

As the Depression hit, the internationalist spirit of the 1920s was replaced by a more selfish, nationalist approach:

- **Protectionism:** Some countries (including Britain, France and the USA) tried to protect their own industries by introducing **TARIFFS** to limit or stop imports. However, their trading partners did the same thing so trade simply worsened, leading to more businesses going bust and greater unemployment.
- **Rearmament:** Many countries (including Germany, Japan, Italy and Britain) began the process of **REARMAMENT** as a way of boosting industry and finding jobs for the unemployed. Afraid of being left weak while other states built up their armed forces, more and more countries did the same.

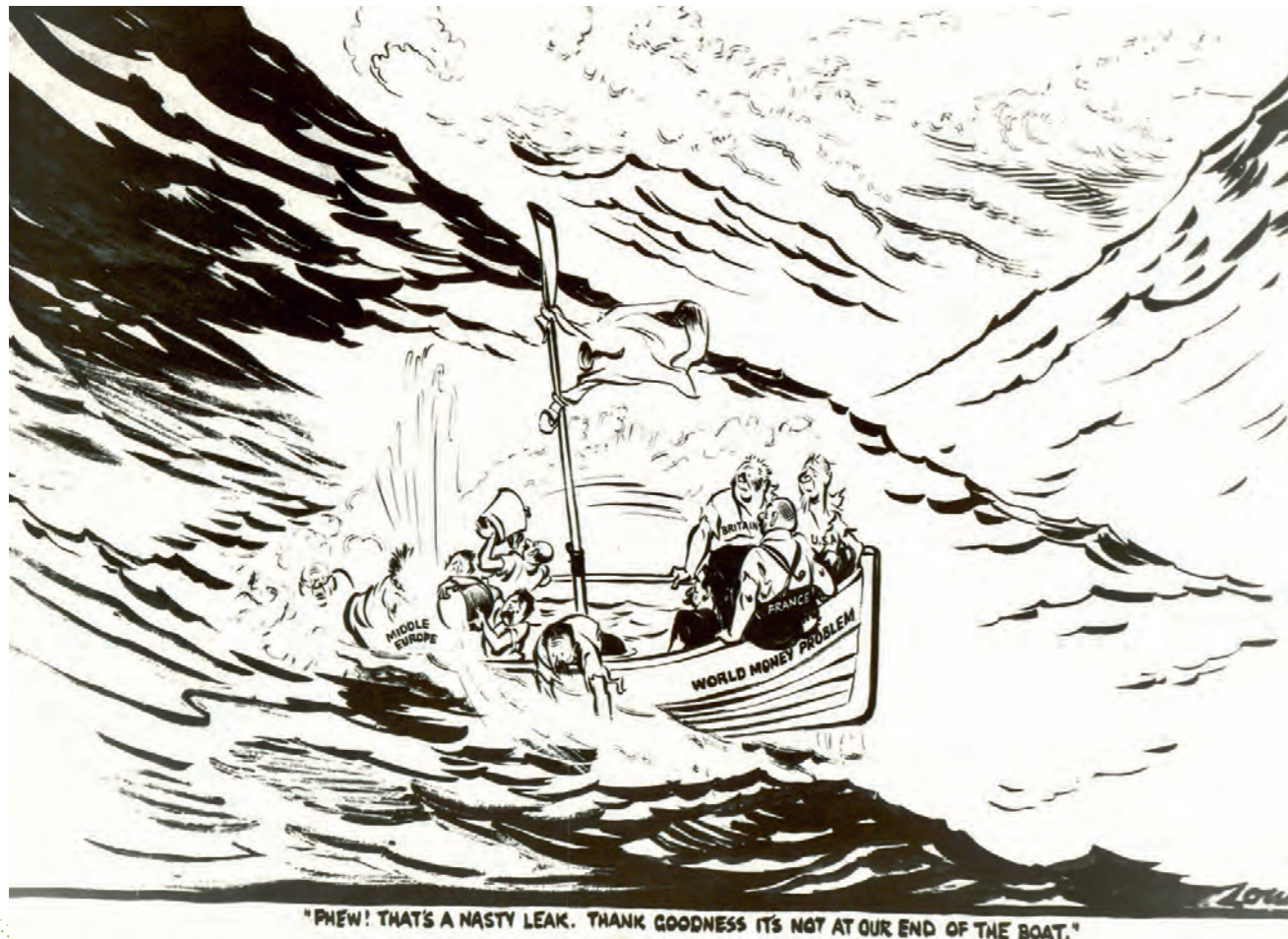
American loans called in

At the end of the First World War, Europe's economies were in ruins. Loans from US banks had helped Europe to recover in the 1920s. Most of the loans had gone to help rebuild the German economy, but the USA had also provided financial assistance to new states in central and eastern Europe, including Poland and Czechoslovakia. When the Depression hit, many US banks started to run out of money. As a result, they called in their loans, asking European banks to pay back the money they had borrowed.

Britain and France suffered great hardship, but the effects in Germany and other central European states were disastrous. Unemployment rocketed. When the USA, Britain and France also introduced tariffs and refused to lend money to Germany, the Germans felt bitter and betrayed.

- 1 According to Source 2, what is happening to the states of middle Europe?
- 2 What point is the cartoonist, David Low, trying to make about Britain, France and the USA?
- 3 How does Low show how serious the Depression was?
- 4 Do you think Figure 1 or Source 2 is more useful to a historian investigating the impact of the Depression? Explain your answer.

Source 2 A cartoon from a British newspaper, March 1932. The states of Middle Europe include Germany, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. ▼



"PHEW! THAT'S A NASTY LEAK. THANK GOODNESS IT'S NOT AT OUR END OF THE BOAT."

Uncorrected proof

Source 3 An extract from a letter by the Belgian journalist and cartoonist Louis Raemaekers to British politician Winston Churchill, March 1933. Raemaekers included two cartoons with his letter. Kehl was a town on the border between France and Germany. Danzig was a free city run by the League of Nations after the Treaty of Versailles.

In very recent speeches Hitler declared that 'Pacifism had to be stamped out of the German nation'. He has put this thinking into practice. He has overwhelmed the town of Kehl with his Stormtroopers. He has also organised large numbers of Stormtroopers in Danzig. Hundreds of thousands of these Stormtroopers have been brought in to swell the German army. Leading Germans who believe Germany should be peaceful have been imprisoned. It may be that the obvious war preparations in Germany, Hungary, Italy and Bulgaria are not seen as important in Britain. But it seems to me it is time for Britain to take a more active policy towards world peace. Could you see your way to getting my two cartoons on this matter published in British newspapers? No fee is required.

- 5 What events are most worrying to the author of Source 3?
- 6 Is there any reason to doubt what he is saying about the state of international relations at this time?
- 7 The author of Source 3 was a committed supporter of the League of Nations. How can you tell this from the source?

Factor 2: The emergence of powerful dictatorships in Europe

Germany

After the First World War Germany was rocked by economic and political crises (see pages 132–133). By the end of the 1920s Germany was much more stable and prosperous, thanks to a great extent to US loans. When the US called in the loans in 1929, the German economy collapsed. Unemployment rocketed. Many Germans felt that their government had let them down. People began to turn to extremist political parties. By 1933, the most extreme of all, the Nazis, were running Germany. There is little doubt that the Depression played a key role in destabilising Germany and bringing Nazi leader Adolf Hitler to power.

The Nazis believed in an aggressive political nationalism – putting Germany and the German people before anything else. Hitler offered radical solutions to Germany's economic problems, including:

- a massive rearmament programme
- extensive state control of industry and investment in projects such as road-building
- getting rid of the Treaty of Versailles and ending reparations payments.

Hitler wanted more than just economic recovery. His nationalist policies set him on a collision path with his European neighbours. He declared his intention to:

- reclaim land lost under the Treaty of Versailles
- carve out living space (**LEBENSRAUM**) for Germans in eastern Europe
- destroy communism in Germany and anywhere else it was found.

Italy

Italy had been under the control of the Fascist Party led by Benito Mussolini since 1922. **FASCISM** was a type of aggressive political nationalism. Mussolini used the Depression to tighten his grip on the country by taking over its banks and industries. Mussolini's vision for Italy was a potential threat to international peace:

- Mussolini had long held ambitions to build an Italian empire, to bring back the glory days of the Roman Empire. He was hoping to gain territories in Africa.
- Mussolini also believed that established powers like Britain and France were in decline. He felt that Italy had more in common with Hitler's new regime in Germany, and he started to discuss an alliance.

The Soviet Union

The First World War had caused a revolution in Russia which eventually brought the communists to power there. **COMMUNISM** brought state control of industry and the economy, as well as a harsh **DICTATORSHIP** that clamped down on opposition. The communists also turned the Russian Empire into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (**USSR**). Through an organisation called **COMINTERN** (short for 'Communist International'), the USSR tried to spread communist ideas. The democracies, including Britain and the USA, were very suspicious of the USSR and feared it was trying to spread communism across the world.

By 1929, a new supreme leader had emerged in the USSR – Josef Stalin. Stalin was convinced that non-communist states would try to crush the communist USSR. The emergence of Germany and Italy, which were so strongly anti-communist, made Stalin feel even more threatened. He built up the USSR's industries to be ready for a future war. These actions and mutual suspicions all meant that the outlook for international relations was not good.

Factor 3: The failure of the League of Nations in Manchuria

Europe was not the only place where aggressive nationalist regimes emerged in the 'hinge years'. The Depression hit Japan hard. In rural areas there was widespread hardship and even famine. Worldwide economic problems, and particularly tariffs imposed by China and the USA, meant that Japan was unable to sell its products, especially silk and other textiles. The prices for Japanese goods fell by 50 per cent. As in Germany, the Japanese government began to take increasing control of the main industries, and the economy as a whole. Here too, people began to blame the elected government and support more hard-line nationalist politicians. These men were in league with military commanders who believed that the solution to Japan's problems was to build up the military and take control of new territories that would give them access to raw materials and markets for their goods. Japan effectively became a MILITARY DICTATORSHIP (a country run by the army).

Source 4 A cartoon by David Low from a British newspaper, November 1931. ▼



Japan invades Manchuria 1931

In 1931, an incident in the Chinese region of Manchuria gave these nationalist leaders an ideal opportunity. The Japanese army controlled the South Manchurian Railway (see Figure 5). Claiming that Chinese troops had attacked the railway, they used this as an excuse to invade and set up their own government in Manchuria. Japan's civilian politicians protested, but the military was now in charge in Japan. China appealed to the League of Nations. This was a critical moment – would internationalism in the form of the League of Nations triumph over the aggressive nationalism of Japan?

Figure 5 A map showing Japan's invasion of Manchuria 1931–33. ▼



Uncorrected proof



Source 6 A cartoon by David Low from a British newspaper, November 1932. ▲

- 1 Study Source 4. What is Low's attitude towards Japan in November 1931?
- 2 Do you get the impression from Source 4 that the cartoonist thinks Japan will get away with invading Manchuria?
- 3 Now study Source 6. Has Low's attitude towards Japan changed after one year?
- 4 Has Low's view of the League of Nations changed?
- 5 Study Source 7. What is the cartoonist's attitude towards Europe? What details make you think this?

The League's response

The League took a cautious approach. After all, Japan was one of its most powerful and important members. League officials, under the British Lord Lytton, were sent to investigate the issue in Manchuria. They took a full year to present their report, which was completed in September 1932. The report was detailed and balanced, and the judgement was clear: Japan had acted unlawfully and Manchuria should be returned to the Chinese.

However, instead of withdrawing from Manchuria, in February 1933 the Japanese announced that they intended to invade more of China. They claimed that China was politically unstable and that the invasion was necessary for Japan to protect itself. On 24 February 1933, the report from the League's officials was approved by 42 votes to 1 in the Assembly. Only Japan voted against it. A month later, Japan resigned from the League of Nations and invaded the Chinese province of Jehol.

The League discussed economic sanctions, but without the USA, Japan's main trading partner, they would be meaningless. The League also discussed banning arms sales to Japan, but the member countries were worried that Japan would retaliate and the war would escalate. There was no prospect of Britain and France risking a war with Japan. Only the USA and the USSR would have had the resources to remove the Japanese from Manchuria by force and they were not even members of the League.

Consequences

Several excuses were offered for the League's failure: Japan was so far away; it was a special case; the Japanese had a valid a point when they said that China was politically unstable. However, the significance of the Manchurian crisis was obvious: the League had proved powerless if a strong nation decided to pursue an aggressive policy. Japan had committed blatant aggression. Both Hitler and Mussolini looked on with interest. They would soon both follow Japan's example.

Factor 4: The failure of disarmament

You have already seen how the League of Nations and the great powers attempted – but largely failed – to reach agreements on disarmament in the 1920s. In the 1930s, there was increased pressure for the League to address disarmament.

The Disarmament Conference

In the wake of the Manchurian crisis, it became clear that something had to be done about disarmament. The US president, Herbert Hoover, encouraged states in Europe to come up with disarmament plans. In exchange, the USA offered to reduce or cancel their debts (see Source 7). In February 1932, the long-promised Disarmament Conference finally got under way. It came up with proposals to ban bombing of civilian populations and restrictions on some types of weapons. However, they could not agree on how to enforce the restrictions.



Source 7 'You can't have both!': a US cartoon from 1932, commenting on disarmament. At this time most European countries were still in debt to the USA from their loans.

German disarmament

Under the Treaty of Versailles, Germany had been forced to disarm. Other countries were also supposed to, but they had not. By the time of the Disarmament Conference, most people accepted that Germany should be treated more equally. In December 1932 an agreement was finally reached, but this proved short-lived. In January 1933, Hitler took power in Germany and began rearming Germany in secret. In October 1933, he pulled out of the conference altogether. By then most nations suspected that Hitler was rearming and accordingly they began to increase their own armed forces. The Disarmament Conference struggled on for another year, but few leaders paid much attention to it. Hitler publicly announced his rearmament programme in 1935.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

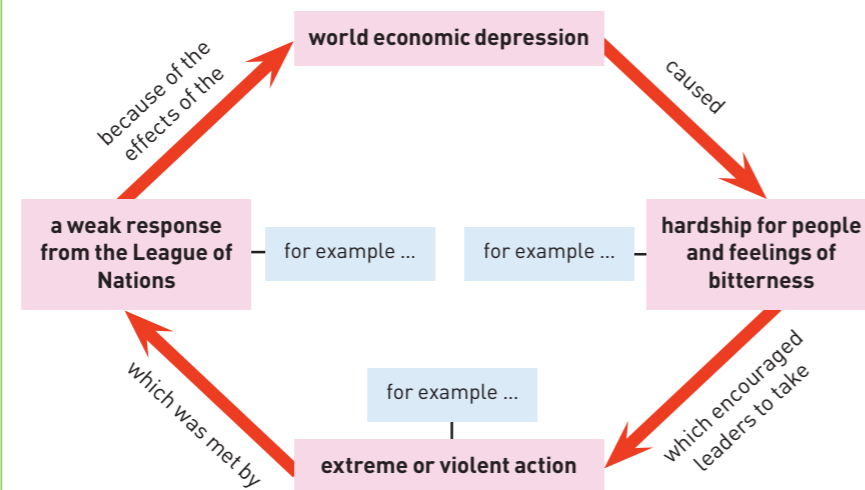
- 1 Describe the problems caused by the worldwide economic depression. (5)
- 2 Describe the main events of the Manchurian crisis 1931–33. (5)
- 3 Explain why the Depression had such a bad effect on international relations. (10)
- 4 'The most serious challenge to international relations 1929–33 was the Manchurian crisis.' Explain how far you agree. (10)

FOCUS TASK

What went wrong in the 'hinge years' 1929–34?

The diagram below shows one way of summarising what went wrong in international relations in this period.

- 1 On your own copy of this diagram, add examples from this topic.
- 2 Use your diagram to answer this essay question:
What went wrong in international relations the years 1929–34?



TOPIC SUMMARY

The impact of the Depression

- 1 The 1920s saw an economic boom in the USA. It lent money to many countries in Europe and Asia to help rebuild their economies.
- 2 In October 1929, the Wall Street Crash caused a worldwide economic depression. US banks asked for their loans to be repaid, which led to bankruptcies and unemployment in many countries.
- 3 Economic hardship led people to vote for extreme nationalist parties. The Nazis took power in Germany and the Fascist Party strengthened its grip in Italy. Both regimes planned aggressive expansion as a solution to their problems.
- 4 In Japan, the Depression caused major economic problems that led to political upheaval. The civilian government was effectively overthrown by the army and some politicians who supported them. Japan invaded Manchuria in China in 1931.
- 5 The League of Nations condemned Japan and ordered it to leave Manchuria. Japan refused and expanded further into China. The League was unable to stop Japan and the organisation's credibility was badly damaged.
- 6 The League of Nations tried to calm international tension by setting up talks on disarmament. However, many countries had used rearmament as a way to boost their economy. Few trusted their neighbours enough to disarm. Germany demanded that all states should disarm as they had been forced to. When this did not happen, Hitler left the talks in 1934 and openly announced German rearmament in 1935.

1.3

'The dark valley': The failure of the League of Nations, Appeasement and the drift to war

FOCUS TASK

You have seen how international co-operation was replaced by nationalism in the period 1929–34, but there was worse to come. In this topic, you will examine what went wrong in international relations between 1934 and 1939, and why these problems resulted in war.

'The dark valley'

The historian Piers Brendon referred to the 1930s as 'the dark valley'. This was a period when international relations became steadily worse and eventually resulted in war. The great powers turned away from internationalism and began to adopt more nationalist policies, forming secret military alliances against rivals and building up arms just as they had done before the First World War. The reasons for these actions were debated at the time and are still the subject of disagreement today. To understand what happened, we are going to look at four important developments in international relations:

- 1 the invasion of Abyssinia
- 2 the actions of Adolf Hitler
- 3 the policy of Appeasement
- 4 the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

ACTIVITY

As you work through this chapter, use a table like the one below to build your own timeline of the main events. Try to restrict yourself to a maximum of three events per year. Describe the event in column 2. Explain its importance in column 3. You might want to include more events in your first draft and then come back and cut some out when you reach the end of the topic.

	Event(s)	Why this event is important
1933		
1934		
1935		
1936		
1937		
1938		
1939		

Uncorrected proof



The invasion of Abyssinia: Why did this do so much harm to the League of Nations?

The Manchurian crisis had badly damaged the credibility of the League of Nations. In 1935, a new crisis developed when Italy invaded Abyssinia (now Ethiopia). This event really tested the League and its internationalist ambitions.

Britain, France and Italy all had COLONIES in northern and eastern Africa. Italy's leader Mussolini had his eye on the fertile lands and mineral wealth of Abyssinia, but above all he wanted to restore Italy to the glory of the days of the ancient Roman Empire. To do that, he needed military conquests.

In December 1934, Mussolini took advantage of a dispute over who owned the land around the Wal-Wal Oasis and prepared to invade Abyssinia. The Abyssinian emperor, Haile Selassie, appealed to the League for help. This was a clear case of aggression and Abyssinia lay close to British and French territories (see Figure 1), so they had an interest in events in this region in a way they had not over events in Manchuria. Would the League be more successful in dealing with this crisis?

Figure 1 A map showing the Italian invasion of Abyssinia. ▲

FOCUS TASK

What did the Abyssinian crisis reveal about international relations?

Copy the table below.

Abyssinian crisis	Headline	Evidence of internationalism (including the League) working	Evidence that nationalism was winning over internationalism
Phase 1			
Phase 2			

- As you study the events of the Abyssinian crisis, record evidence in columns 3 and 4.
- When you have finished, decide on a good 'headline' title for each phase to sum up what was going on.

Phase 1: January to October 1935

In public, Britain and France were seen to be representing the League in trying to negotiate a settlement with Mussolini. However, it was a different story behind the scenes:

- In Italy, Mussolini began despatching forces to Africa and whipping up war fever among the Italian people.
- Britain and France were trying to protect their own interests. They wanted to stay on good terms with Mussolini because they believed he was a possible ally against Hitler. In April 1935, the British and French prime ministers met with Mussolini and agreed the Stresa Pact. This was a formal statement against German rearmament and a commitment to stand against Germany. They did not even discuss Abyssinia at their meeting. Some historians believe that Mussolini interpreted this as a promise that Britain and France would ignore his actions in Abyssinia.

Uncorrected proof

There was strong support in Britain for action, possibly even military action against Italy. The British foreign secretary, Samuel Hoare, made a speech at the League Assembly, stressing Britain's commitment to collective security. A League committee was sent to investigate the Wal-Wal incident and reported back in September 1935 (eight months later). The report concluded that neither side could be blamed and proposed giving Italy some Abyssinian territory.

Phase 2: October 1935 to May 1936

Mussolini rejected the League's proposals and invaded Abyssinia in October 1935. This was a clear case of a large, powerful state attacking a smaller one. The League had been established to deal with exactly this kind of dispute. After a frustrating delay that allowed Mussolini to build up his stocks of war materials, the League finally imposed sanctions. It banned arms sales and financial loans to Italy. It also banned the export to Italy of rubber, tin and metals, and prohibited imports from Italy.

However, the League delayed a decision for two months over whether to ban oil exports to Italy. It feared that the USA would not support such a sanction. Nationalist considerations also came into play. In Britain, the government learned that 30,000 British coal miners were about to lose their jobs because of the ban on coal exports to Italy. More importantly, the Suez Canal – which was owned by Britain and France – was not closed to Mussolini's supply ships. The canal was the Italians' main supply route to Abyssinia and closing it could have brought a swift end to Mussolini's Abyssinian campaign. Both Britain and France were afraid that closing the canal might result in war with Italy.

The Hoare-Laval Pact

There was worse to come. In December 1935, while sanctions discussions were still taking place, the British and French foreign ministers, Samuel Hoare and Pierre Laval, were hatching a plan. They aimed to give Mussolini two-thirds of Abyssinia in return for calling off his invasion. Laval even suggested that they approach Mussolini with this plan before they showed it to either the League of Nations or Haile Selassie. Laval told the British government that if it did not agree to the plan, the French would no longer support sanctions against Italy. However, details of the Hoare-Laval Pact were leaked to the French press. The people of France and Britain regarded the plan as an act of treachery against the League. Hoare and Laval were both sacked, but the real damage was to the reputation of the League, especially when the question about whether to ban oil sales was put aside.

- In what ways was the Abyssinian crisis similar to the Manchurian crisis?
- In what ways was it different?
- Look at Source 2. In the cartoon, what has happened to the League of Nations?
- Who has caused this?
- What is the cartoonist trying to say about Samuel Hoare?

Source 2 A British cartoon from December 1935. The main figure is Samuel Hoare. He is holding a cosh – a small club often used by muggers. ►



The situation worsens

The US Congress was appalled by the Hoare-Laval Pact and blocked a move by the USA to support the League's sanctions against Italy. In fact, US oil producers increased their exports to Italy. On 7 March 1936, German leader Adolf Hitler – timing his move to perfection – marched his troops into the Rhineland, in open defiance of the Treaty of Versailles. All hope of French support for sanctions against Italy was now dead. The French needed Italy as an ally against Germany and were prepared to sacrifice Abyssinia to this end. Italy continued to defy the League's orders and by May 1936 had taken control of the whole of Abyssinia.

Source 3 The front cover of the pro-Nazi magazine *Simplicissimus*, 1936. The warrior is delivering a message to the League of Nations (the 'Völkerbund'): 'I am sorry to disturb your sleep but I just wanted to tell you that you should no longer bother yourselves about this Abyssinian business. The matter has been settled elsewhere.' ►



- 1 What does the large figure in Source 3 represent?
- 2 How is the League portrayed?
- 3 Do you get the impression that the cartoonist approves or disapproves of the situation?

Source 4 Historian Zara Steiner, writing in 2011.

The weakening of the League of Nations speeded up the retreat from internationalism to nationalism at every level. The Abyssinian crisis and Hitler's reoccupation of the Rhineland in 1936 affected the small states as well as the Great Powers. The small states turned their backs on Geneva and looked for other ways to protect themselves. The Great Powers returned to their pre-1914 practices: once again secret treaties, alliances, and arms races dominated the world scene.

The consequences of the Abyssinian crisis

The League of Nations had failed and collective security had been shown to be nothing but an empty promise. If the British and French had hoped that their handling of the Abyssinian crisis would strengthen their position against Hitler, they were soon proved wrong. In November 1936, Mussolini and Hitler signed an agreement of their own – the Rome-Berlin Axis.

FOCUS TASK

What were the consequences of the Abyssinian crisis for internationalism and the League of Nations?

- 1 Study Source 4 and the text on pages 30–32. Try to summarise the consequences of the Abyssinian crisis for internationalism and the League of Nations in a paragraph of just 100 words.
- 2 **Extension:** Discuss the following question:
Was it the League that failed its members or the members who failed the League?

Uncorrected proof

The actions of Adolf Hitler 1933–37: Why wasn't Hitler challenged?

Between 1918 and 1933, Adolf Hitler rose from being an obscure and demoralised member of the defeated German army to become the all-powerful FÜHRER, dictator of Germany, with almost unlimited power. His is an astonishing story that you can read about in detail in Chapter 4. Hitler's emergence onto the international stage from 1933 marked another shift in international relations.

Hitler's beliefs

Hitler was strongly nationalist. He wanted to promote Germany's interests above all others. You have already seen how he hated the Treaty of Versailles and demanded that Germany's lost territories should be returned. However, Hitler brought another, particularly dangerous dimension to international relations: his Nazi IDEOLOGY. He set out the main elements of this in his autobiography *Mein Kampf* ('My Struggle') in 1923–24.



Source 5 Historian Jeremy Noakes, writing in 1998.

Hitler had of course publicly stated his foreign policy 'programme' in his book 'Mein Kampf'. It is doubtful, though, whether the officials in the German foreign ministry had even read, let alone taken seriously, what he had written. And the officials in the French and British foreign ministries had certainly not read it or taken it seriously. It was assumed that the Nazis would be 'tamed' by less radical elements inside Germany.

Destroying communism

Hitler believed that communism (usually referred to as Bolshevism by the Nazis) was a disease that had to be wiped out. He persecuted communists in Germany. Since the USSR was a communist state, it seemed likely that the two countries would clash at some point.

Racial theory and Lebensraum

Hitler claimed that Germans were Aryans – a master race. He believed that Jews, Slavs (most of the peoples of eastern Europe including Czechs, Poles and Russians) were inferior. It was Germany's destiny to create an empire that would rule over these peoples and give Germans the *Lebensraum* ('living space') they needed.

Militarism

Hitler regarded war as a measure of the health and strength of a nation. Historians are still debating whether or not Hitler always intended to go to war. However, there is no doubt that within a short time of the Nazis coming to power, Hitler was preparing Germany for conflict.

ACTIVITY

It is 1933. Write a briefing paper for the British government on Hitler's plans for Germany. Conclude with your own assessment on whether the government should be worried about Hitler and his plans. In your conclusion, remember these facts about the British government:

- Britain is a leading member of the League of Nations and is supposed to uphold the Treaty of Versailles – by force if necessary.
- The British government does not trust the communist USSR, and thinks that a strong Germany could help to contain the communist threat.

- 1 How many of Hitler's actions between 1933 and 1936 were legal?
- 2 How many were illegal?

Hitler's actions

Hitler lost no time in turning his words into actions. Between 1933 and 1936, he defied many of the key terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

Leaving the League 1933: Hitler withdrew Germany from the League of Nations, claiming that his country was not being treated equally. This undermined the League's authority.

Rearmament 1933–35: Hitler began to rearm Germany in 1933. This was specifically banned by the Treaty of Versailles. He drafted thousands of unemployed workers into the army to reduce unemployment. He also began to STOCKPILE weapons, in secret at first. In 1934, he walked out of the League of Nations Disarmament Conference (see page 27). By 1935, he no longer bothered to hide Germany's rearmament programme. He publicly paraded his forces in a 'Freedom to Rearm' rally in Berlin, again boosting his prestige and support in Germany, particularly from the army commanders.

The Saar 1935: In 1919, the Saar region was run by the League of Nations (see Factfile on page 13). Hitler claimed it should be part of Germany. The League forced Hitler to agree to a PLEBISCITE. Nearly 90 per cent of people in the

region voted to join Hitler's Germany, boosting his prestige in his country.

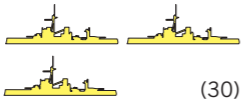


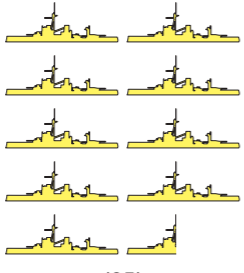
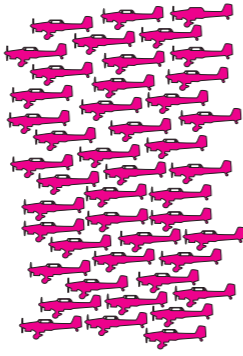
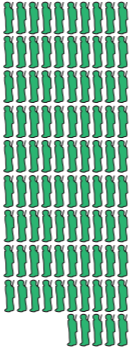


Remilitarisation of the Rhineland 1936:

The Treaty of Versailles banned German forces from entering the Rhineland, a region on the border with France. In 1925, Germany had accepted this restriction in the Locarno Treaties. In February 1936, France and the USSR

agreed a Mutual Assistance Treaty to protect each other in the event of an attack by Germany. Hitler claimed he was being encircled and therefore had the right to protect his own borders, so in March 1936 he ordered troops into the Rhineland. It was a huge gamble. If the British and French had sent troops he would have been forced to withdraw. But they were too concerned with the Abyssinian crisis. The League condemned Hitler's actions but no further action was taken.

Figure 6 A graph showing Germany's armed forces in 1932 and 1939. Under the Treaty of Versailles Germany was only allowed an army of 100,000 men, six battleships and no military aircraft. ▶

	Warships	Aircraft	Soldiers
1932	 (30)	 (36)	 (100,000)
1939	 (95)	 (8,250)	 (950,000)

Uncorrected proof



Source 7 A postcard published in France to mark the bombing of the Spanish town of Guernica in 1937. The text reads: 'The Basque people murdered by German planes. Guernica martyred 26 April 1937.' ▲

- 3 Study Source 7. Images like this were widely published in newspapers across the world. What effect do you think they would have had on public opinion?

The Spanish Civil War 1936

In 1936, a civil war broke out between two rival groups in Spain: republicans and nationalists. The war quickly developed an international dimension. The USSR supported the republican side with weapons and aircraft. Britain and France refused to intervene. Germany and Italy also said they would not intervene but then did exactly that. The nationalist leader General Francisco Franco had a similar ideology to Hitler and Mussolini. They helped Franco by supplying troops (claiming they were 'volunteers'), aircraft and other equipment. German aircraft also bombed republican strongholds to devastating effect (see Source 7).

This intervention had important consequences for international relations. Because Britain and France did not get involved in the Spanish Civil War, Hitler assumed that they would take the same attitude to any war. At the same time, the terrible impact of modern weapons, particularly bombing, convinced the British prime minister Neville Chamberlain that war must be avoided at all costs. The Spanish Civil War therefore encouraged Hitler in his plan to reverse the Treaty of Versailles. At the same time, the USSR became increasingly suspicious of Britain and France because of their reluctance to oppose Hitler and Mussolini.

The Anti-Comintern Pact and the Axis alliance 1936–37

Hitler and Mussolini had shown that their armed forces were effective and that they were ready to use them. Meanwhile, in the east, Japan had come under the control of hard-line nationalist commanders such as General Tojo. Hitler and Mussolini saw that they had much in common with the military dictatorship in Japan. In 1936, Germany and Japan had signed the Anti-Comintern Pact to pledge their opposition to communism (see page 25 for information on Comintern). In 1937, Italy also signed the pact. The new grouping of countries became known as the Axis alliance.

Anti-Comintern Pact to pledge their opposition to communism (see page 25 for information on Comintern). In 1937, Italy also signed the pact. The new grouping of countries became known as the Axis alliance.

ACTIVITY

Look back at the briefing paper you wrote for the activity on page 33. That was in 1933. It is now 1937. Do you think you need to revise your report? Explain how, or revise it if you prefer.

You might want to refer to how the events of 1933–37 have:

- increased Hitler's prestige and confidence
- weakened the authority of Britain, France and the League given Hitler's new allies
- improved his military capability.

Why was Hitler able to achieve so much between 1933 and 1937?

It is clear to us today that Hitler's actions contributed to the outbreak of the Second World War. As Source 8 shows, there were plenty of commentators criticising Hitler's actions and those who failed to oppose him. So you might wonder why no countries at the time, including Britain and France, took any steps to stop him. To understand why they did not do so, we need to clear our vision of hindsight as best we can. The statesmen of the 1930s did not know where these events would lead. We have to try see things from their perspective. Can we look inside the mind of a British prime minister in the late 1930s?

Look at the diagram opposite. You can see evidence of these ideas in British actions. For example, their response to Hitler's rearmament in 1935 was to sign a naval agreement with him that allowed Germany to build its navy up to 35 per cent of the size of the British navy. This clearly broke the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, but it must have made sense to the statesmen of the time. However, the result of such behaviour was that it encouraged Hitler to believe that Britain did not mind what he was doing. Indeed, he began to think Britain might even join him in an alliance against France and the USSR (he was wrong about this).

It is also important to understand the French point of view at the time, and why they may not have entirely trusted Britain. France shared a border with Germany, so the French were more worried about Hitler than they were about Stalin and any potential communist threat. France had been invaded from Germany many times before. The French therefore sought a formal alliance with Britain against Germany. When Britain refused, the French made a pact with Stalin instead (in 1936). This gave Hitler an excuse to remilitarise the Rhineland. It is also clear that British politicians failed to fully understand what Hitler was thinking.

Source 8 A cartoon by David Low, published in the *London Evening Standard*, 1936. This was a popular newspaper with a large readership in Britain. ▼

ACTIVITY

Write a short letter from Chamberlain to the cartoonist David Low replying to Source 8 (called 'Spineless leaders of Democracy').

- 1 Look at Source 8. What is the cartoonist's view of Hitler?
- 2 What is the cartoonist's view of the other leaders?
- 3 Would you say the cartoonist is more critical of Hitler or the other leaders?



Uncorrected proof

The view from Britain

- We tried to recruit Mussolini as an ally but he proved to be unreliable and has sided with Hitler.
- I'm not in a strong position!
- The USA won't help us. They have isolated themselves from Europe's concerns.
- I am not even sure about France. We don't agree about how to treat Germany. The French are so paranoid they might even end up provoking Germany into war.
- He has a point about the Treaty of Versailles. Some of its terms were too harsh on Germany.
- Is Hitler really that bad?
- And as for all that extremist nonsense he spouts – he can't be serious!
- He's right about disarmament. No one else has disarmed.
- To be honest I'm more worried about Stalin and communism than Hitler! And Hitler is standing up against communism.

FOCUS TASK

How did Hitler's actions increase tensions in Europe in the period 1933–37?

To answer this question you need to do more than just list what Hitler did. You also need to explain how his actions caused tensions. It is important to plan and practise answering questions like this. If your planning is good, the writing is easy. Make a copy of this table and use it to plan an answer to the question above.

Hitler's actions	Reasons	How and why Britain and France reacted	Impact on international relations

Rather than writing your answer down, try explaining it to a friend. This will help you to know if you have explained things clearly.

Appeasement 1937–38: A triumph or a sell-out?

Neville Chamberlain officially became British prime minister in 1937. However, he had been acting prime minister two years already as the prime minister Stanley Baldwin had been ill. In that time, Chamberlain had begun a rearmament programme in Britain to prepare for the possibility of war, suggesting that he was realistic about the international situation. By 1937, Chamberlain was in regular contact with the French leader Edouard Daladier and was beginning to share his concerns about Hitler. You may think that the two men should have been planning a 'get tough' approach towards Hitler. In reality the policy Britain and France adopted in 1937–38 is known as Appeasement, and it basically meant giving Hitler what he wanted.

The Anschluss: Germany unites with Austria 1938

The next crisis came over Austria in 1938. The people who lived in Austria were mainly German. Hitler himself was Austrian. He wanted to unite the Germans in Austria with those in Germany. The treaties of Versailles and St Germain specifically forbade this, but that did not trouble Hitler. Austria had a strong Nazi Party and Hitler ordered these Nazis to campaign for union, or *Anschluss*, causing unrest. He then threatened to move troops into Austria to 'restore order'. The Austrian chancellor, Kurt Schuschnigg, asked Britain and France to put pressure on Hitler to make him back down, but they did nothing.

Hitler marched troops into Austria in March 1938. A plebiscite was organised, in which 99.75 per cent of the population agreed to the *Anschluss*. It was another significant success for Hitler. He had increased the German population and added Austria's reserves of gold and iron ore to Germany's industry. Britain and France had done nothing to stop him. In fact there was some agreement in these countries that the post-First World War treaties were unfair and that Germany and Austria should be allowed to unite if it was what the people wanted. Hitler began to believe that Britain and France would not fight to preserve the Treaty of Versailles – they might not be prepared to fight at all.

Figure 9 A map showing central Europe after the Anschluss. ▼



Uncorrected proof

- 1 Read Source 10. Are you surprised by what it says about the reaction of Britain and France to the *Anschluss*?
- 2 What impression do you get of Chamberlain from Source 10?
- 3 Where is the next crisis likely to occur?
- 4 How is this source useful as evidence about international relations at this time?

Source 10 A US radio broadcast made immediately after the *Anschluss*.

Last night groups of cheering Nazis tore down the border posts on the Austrian German border to signify they were now one nation. Over in London officials are watching every move Hitler makes. Prime Minister Chamberlain is determined to match Hitler gun for gun before openly pledging Britain's support for Czechoslovakia against a German invasion. In parliament today Chamberlain condemned Germany's actions in Austria. The prime minister is trying to win support for his big defence programme which may even include five years compulsory military service. Britain's programme, currently in its second year, is to cost over 7 billion dollars and may rise to 10 billion. At the same time France has asked for renewed pledges of British support. France has vowed to fight for Czechoslovakia. Meanwhile the government in Washington is watching the whole European situation with close concern.

Source 11 One of a set of 50 cigarette cards circulated in 1938 giving advice on how to cope with air raids. Cigarette cards were collectible sets of cards included in cigarette packets. People were encouraged to collect the full set. ▼



Source 12 A photograph of air-raid shelters being dug in London, September 1938. ►

The Sudetenland and the Munich Agreement 1938

After the *Anschluss*, the map of Europe shows Czechoslovakia looking a bit like a small creature about to be swallowed up by a large predator. That is probably a fair summary of how the Czechs felt. Czech leader Edvard Beňes was appalled by Germany's union with Austria. He asked for promises from Britain and France that they would protect his country against a German invasion. This time they gave those promises.

Hitler was interested in Czechoslovakia because the Sudetenland region of the country was mostly populated by Germans. As in Austria, Hitler got Nazis in the Sudetenland to stir up trouble and demand to join with Germany. In May 1938, Hitler expressed his support for the Sudeten Germans and threatened to invade if Czechoslovakia did not hand over the region to German control.

Beňes was prepared to fight. Czechoslovakia had a modern army and the support of Britain and France. Tension rose through the summer as the world braced itself for a new European war. In Britain, local councils began digging air-raid shelters. Magazines carried advertisements for air-raid protection and gas masks. Neither Hitler nor Beňes backed down.





Source 13 A cartoon published in Canada in 1938. ▲

- Crisis talks – agreement at Munich 1938
By mid-September the situation had reached crisis point. Chamberlain made one last effort to avoid war.
- **15 September:** Chamberlain flew to meet Hitler. The meeting appeared to go well. Hitler moderated his demands, saying he was only interested in parts of the Sudetenland – and then only if a plebiscite showed that the Sudeten Germans wanted to join Germany. Chamberlain thought this was reasonable and that if Hitler got what he wanted, he would at last be satisfied.
 - **19 September:** France and Britain put to Czechoslovakia their plans to give Hitler the parts of the Sudetenland that he wanted.
 - **22 September:** Hitler increased his demands. He said he wanted the whole of the Sudetenland. Chamberlain told Hitler that his demands were unreasonable. War seemed imminent.
 - **29 September:** Mussolini agreed to join Hitler, Chamberlain and Daladier at a Four Power Summit in Munich. The other

leaders decided to give Hitler the Sudetenland. This became known as the Munich Agreement. The Czechs were not consulted about the agreement (nor was the USSR). The following morning Chamberlain and Hitler published a joint declaration, which Chamberlain said would bring 'peace for our time'.

Triumph or sell out?

Many newspapers and newsreels at the time hailed the Munich Agreement as a triumph. Chamberlain was greeted by cheering crowds on his return to Britain. However, there were also many voices criticising the decisions made at Munich. There is evidence that the British public was still concerned. Opinion polls in September 1938 show that a majority of the British people did not think Appeasement would stop Hitler. There was also deep unease in the USA and in parts of the British Empire, especially Canada and Australia. You will investigate reactions to Appeasement in more detail in Topic 1.4.

- 1 Look at Source 13. Which do you think is a better summary of its message?
 - a It is critical of Chamberlain because he is clueless.
 - b It is sympathetic towards Chamberlain because he is beset by many problems.

FOCUS TASK

How did the policy of Appeasement affect international relations 1937–38?

To answer this question you need to do more than just list what Britain and France did. You also need to make sure that you can explain how these actions helped to ease tensions or made them worse. Copy the table below and use it to plan an answer to the question.

Example of Appeasement	Causes (actions of Hitler)	Reasons (why Britain and France did what they did)	Impact on international relations

Uncorrected proof



Source 14 A British cartoon from 1939. The bear represents the USSR. ▲

Source 15 A Soviet cartoon from early 1939. CCCP is Russian for USSR and the other signpost points to western Europe. The police officers are Britain and France. ▼



The Nazi-Soviet Pact: Why did such bitter enemies do a deal?

The end of Appeasement

Hitler moved his forces into the Sudetenland in October 1938. He stated that this was the end of his expansionist ambitions, but this was a lie. On 15 March 1939, German troops invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia. For Chamberlain this was a step too far. Unlike the Sudeten Germans, the Czech people had not been separated from their homeland by the Treaty of Versailles so Hitler had no claim to this land. If he continued unchecked, his next target was likely to be Poland. Britain and France told Hitler that if he invaded Poland they would declare war. The policy of Appeasement was ended. However, Hitler still did not believe that Britain and France would risk war by resisting him.

Poland under threat

Hitler definitely did have his eyes on Poland. In the short term he wanted to reclaim the Polish Corridor (see Figure 9 on page 38) and the city of Danzig. To do this he would have to fight Poland. He was confident he could defeat the Polish forces. He was also confident that Britain and France would do nothing. However, he was deeply concerned that Stalin would oppose him since Poland bordered the USSR.

Stalin's concerns

Stalin's concerns about Hitler had grown through the 1930s. The USSR had joined the League of Nations in 1934 and agreed the Mutual Assistance Pact with France in 1936. But the Soviet leader had watched Britain, France and the League do nothing to stop Hitler rearming Germany or seizing territory in Europe. The Munich Agreement made Stalin even more suspicious. He was not consulted about it and it seemed that Chamberlain and Daladier were happy to point Hitler eastwards, towards the USSR (see Source 15).

- 2 According to Source 14, what is Hitler aiming for and what is making him hesitate?
- 3 Do you think the cartoonist would have predicted the events that followed? Explain your answer.
- 4 What point is the cartoonist trying to make in Source 15?
- 5 How does this cartoon help to explain the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939?

The Nazi-Soviet Pact

Stalin held discussions with Chamberlain and Daladier in March 1939 to try to arrange an alliance against Hitler. Negotiations continued through the spring and summer. However, at the same time Stalin was meeting with the Nazi foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, about a different alliance. In August, Stalin made up his mind. He opted for an alliance with Nazi Germany – a decision that stunned the world when it was announced on 24 August. By the terms of the pact, Germany and the USSR agreed not to attack each other. Privately, they also agreed to divide Poland between them and Hitler allowed Stalin to take the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Neither Hitler nor Stalin had any real faith in the agreement. Stalin was playing for time to get his forces ready for when Hitler turned against him (which he did in 1941). The Soviet leader had decided that Britain and France were probably too weak to stand up to Hitler and that even if they *were* strong enough they could not be trusted to do so. In making this agreement, Hitler won the guarantee he needed to invade Poland.

The Second World War

Hitler invaded Poland on 1 September 1939 and German forces swept through the country. But this time Hitler had miscalculated. Britain and France had pledged to come to Poland's aid in the event of an invasion, and this time they honoured that promise. They declared war on Germany on 2 September. The Second World War had begun.

Who was responsible?

There has been a great deal of debate on this question and the arguments have swung back and forth. However, the majority of historians today believe that Hitler was responsible for the war. It could be argued that other factors helped Hitler, such as the failure of the League of Nations or the Depression. It might also be argued that Chamberlain or Stalin could be criticised for doing deals *not stopping Hitler*, but that is not the same as being responsible. They would not have started a war, whereas *Hitler wanted war*.

FOCUS TASK

Why did international relations get so much worse in the period 1933–39?

Make a copy of this table.

Factors	Impact on international relations	Explanation and or example(s)	Most significant in causing Second World War (1–4)
Abyssinian crisis 1935			
Hitler's actions 1933–37			
Appeasement 1937–38			
Nazi-Soviet Pact 1939			

- Look at some of the consequences of the factors in the table on the cards below. Decide which one(s) belong in column 2. You may use a consequence more than once. Explain the impact in column 3.

Damaged credibility of League and internationalism.

Meant Britain and France were seen as untrustworthy allies.

Suggested Britain and France would not stand up to Hitler.

Worried the USSR.

Challenged Versailles Treaty.

- Which of the four issues in the table do you think caused the most damage to international relations in this period? Rank them in column 4, giving an explanation of your top choice.

Uncorrected proof

- There are different kinds of cause:
 - a structural cause (a deep-seated problem like weak foundations in a building)
 - a trigger (like the storm that causes the weak building to fall over).
 Work in pairs and decide whether you think the Nazi-Soviet Pact was a structural cause or a trigger.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Outline the main events of the Abyssinian crisis. (5)
- Outline the actions of Adolf Hitler in the period 1933–37. (5)
- Describe the policy of Appeasement followed by Britain and France in the 1930s. (5)
- Explain why international relations became worse in the period 1933–38. (10)
- Explain why Appeasement is considered to be one of the main causes of the Second World War. (10)

TOPIC SUMMARY

The failure of the League of Nations, Appeasement and the drift to war

- Between 1933 and 1939, many countries abandoned internationalism and put their own national interests first. This led to major tensions and eventually to the Second World War.
- Germany and its Nazi leader Adolf Hitler are often blamed for this. Through the 1930s Hitler pursued an increasingly aggressive policy, starting with rearming Germany in 1933. However other factors played a part as well.
- The Abyssinian crisis of 1936 was triggered by Italy (under its nationalist, fascist leader Benito Mussolini) invading Abyssinia. This caused major confusion for the League of Nations and other European powers. They wanted Italy as an ally against Hitler but also wanted to defend Abyssinia. So they delayed and in the end did very little. The League of Nations was shown to be powerless.
- Hitler chose this moment to make a decisive move to revoke the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. While the attention of world leaders was focused on Abyssinia, he marched his troops into the demilitarised zone of the Rhineland. He followed this up by sending aircraft to support the nationalists in the Spanish Civil War and by forming the Anti-Comintern Pact and Axis alliance with Japan and Italy.
- Britain and France were once again thrown into indecision. They were deeply worried by Hitler but they were not ready or willing to fight him. Some people also had sympathy for Germany and were glad that the country was strong enough to be an important ally against the threat of communism if the need arose.
- They followed a policy of Appeasement towards Hitler in 1937–38. They did not challenge the unification of Germany and Austria (the *Anschluss*). In the Munich Agreement, they allowed him to take parts of Czechoslovakia (the Sudetenland).
- Appeasement came to an end when Hitler invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939. Britain warned that any further aggression would result in a declaration of war. Hitler did not think Britain was serious – or did not care. He struck a deal with his enemy Stalin to divide Poland between them.
- The Nazi-Soviet Pact was a cynical short-term measure – Stalin knew that Hitler would one day fight him, but the deal gave him time to prepare for this. In September 1939, as Nazi tanks rolled into Poland, Britain kept its word and declared war. The European part of the Second World War had started.

KEY TERMS

Make sure you know what these terms mean and are able to use them confidently in your writing.

- communism
- democracy
- disarmament
- fascism
- Fourteen Points
- ideology
- internationalism
- League of Nations
- nationalism
- Paris Peace Conference
- plebiscite
- rearmament
- reparations
- self-determination
- Treaty of Versailles

1.4

The big sell-out? Historical controversy 1: changing interpretations of Appeasement

FOCUS

You have seen that Appeasement was a controversial policy. In this topic, you are going to look in more depth at how attitudes to Appeasement changed and why. This section of the book is different from the others. We are less interested in *what* happened than in *how people's views of what happened* have changed and why.

The story of the story of Appeasement

We think the easiest way to begin this is to tell you 'the story of the story'.

	<i>In 1938, there was some opposition to Appeasement but the majority of the population approved of what Chamberlain did at Munich.</i>
Interpretation 1 Popular majority view (1937–38)	'Well done Chamberlain!' <i>Chamberlain kept the spectre of war at bay for as long as he could. He gave peace a chance.</i>
	<i>The outbreak of the Second World War caused a major change in attitudes.</i>
Interpretation 2 Popular and political view (1939–48)	The 'Guilty Men' <i>Appeasement was a foolish, cowardly and immoral policy that strengthened the dictators and weakened Britain.</i>
	<i>Once the Second World War was over, the events that led to it were reassessed. The most influential historian was the wartime prime minister himself, Winston Churchill.</i>
Interpretation 3 Churchill (orthodox) view (1948–60s)	The appeasers misjudged Hitler <i>Appeasement was a terrible misjudgement and miscalculation, even if it was based on good motives.</i>
	<i>In the 1960s, many orthodox ideas were challenged by a new group of historians.</i>
Interpretation 4 Academic revisionist view (1960s–90s)	Rehabilitating Chamberlain <i>Chamberlain was in an impossible position and he did the best that could have been done under the circumstances.</i>
	<i>And then, as usually happens, the pendulum swung back the other way.</i>
Interpretation 5 Academic counter-revisionist view (1990s–2000s)	Chamberlain back on trial <i>Chamberlain himself was part of the problem. His own personality and assumptions meant he could not deal satisfactorily with the situation.</i>

FOCUS TASK

Summarise the interpretations

Use note cards or draw up a table to produce your own summary of each interpretation. For each one note down:

- Title of interpretation
- Main feature(s) of interpretation
- Why interpretation developed at this time
- Examples of this interpretation

Interpretation 1

Popular majority view

1937–38

'Well done Chamberlain!'

Chamberlain kept the spectre of war at bay for as long as he could. He gave peace a chance.

Summary

In 1937–38, most people approved of Chamberlain's actions. He was treated as a hero when he returned to Britain after signing the Munich Agreement. As he was driven from Heston Airfield to London, thousands of people lined the road in the pouring rain to cheer him. He received an estimated 40,000 letters or telegrams of support. He was applauded by the majority of members of parliament.

Unfortunately, we do not have any record of the discussions between Chamberlain and his ministers that must have followed. However, only one minister resigned and some ministers, including Lord Halifax, became even stronger supporters of Appeasement than Chamberlain was. The US ambassador to Britain, Joseph Kennedy, was also a strong supporter of Chamberlain's policies.

Source 1 A photograph of part of the crowd that met and cheered Chamberlain on his return to London, 30 September 1938.



Source 2 Winston Churchill, speaking in October 1938.

We have suffered a total defeat. ... I think you will find that in a period of time Czechoslovakia will be engulfed in the Nazi regime. We have passed an awful milestone in our history. This is only the beginning of the reckoning.

Context

British people were haunted by memories of the First World War. The country was not united behind the idea of going to war over Czechoslovakia.

Impact

This interpretation did not last long. The euphoria was short-lived. People soon began to feel guilty about what had taken place in Czechoslovakia and that Britain had not stood up to Hitler. Most people in Britain realised that the Munich Agreement brought only a *chance* of peace – not much more. Opinion polls at the time showed that the majority of the population did not naively trust Hitler. They understood that Chamberlain had not really brought lasting peace.

Challenges

There were powerful critics of Appeasement at the time, including politicians such as Winston Churchill (Source 2) and political cartoonists such as David Low (Source 8 on page 36). Their numbers grew steadily.

- 1 Use the framework in the Focus Task on page 44 to summarise this interpretation.

Source 3 The *Yorkshire Post*, December 1938.

By repeatedly surrendering to force, Chamberlain has encouraged aggression ... our central contention, therefore, is that Mr Chamberlain's policy has throughout been based on a fatal misunderstanding of the psychology of dictatorship.

Uncorrected proof

Interpretation 2
Popular and political
view
1939–48

The 'Guilty Men'

Appeasement was a foolish, cowardly and immoral policy that strengthened the dictators and weakened Britain.

Summary

During the Second World War, a new view developed that Appeasement was a foolish, cowardly and immoral policy. This was widely accepted among historians, politicians and the general public.

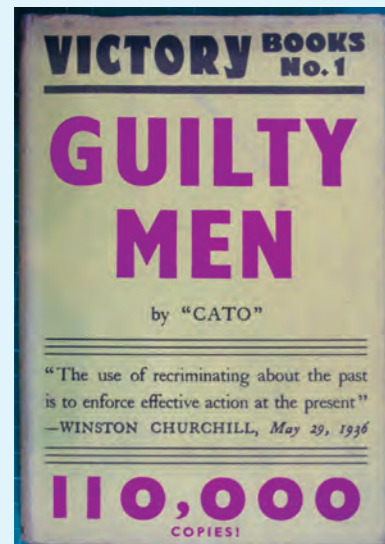
The key to this shift in attitude is likely to be a short book published in 1940 called *Guilty Men*, written by three journalists calling themselves Cato (see Factfile). Their basic argument was that since 1931 British leaders had made concessions to Japan, then Italy, then Germany, and that this had strengthened the dictators and weakened Britain. At the same time, these leaders had ignored the dictators' plans, failed to prepare Britain for war and left it weak and defenceless. The appeasers were portrayed as being almost in league with the dictators.

Interpretation 2 An extract from *Guilty Men* by Cato, published in 1940.

Nazi Germany crossed the frontier of Poland and the world went to war in September 1939. How many warnings had previously been issued to the rulers of Britain? Hitler himself had written it in 'Mein Kampf'; the million speeches delivered by the Nazi leaders on the hustings of Germany; the denunciation of Versailles; the institution of Conscription in Germany; the Rhineland; Spain; Austria; Czechoslovakia; Munich; Prague – these and countless more. How many further proofs were needed?

The Polish army was utterly obliterated. All the facts of Germany's prodigious capacity for war were known. Mr. Churchill had reiterated them to the House of Commons over the previous years. No room was left for doubt. The Nazis had been spending prodigiously. In the year before the war they spent £1,650,000,000 on armaments alone. Our rulers turned themselves to the task in a more leisurely manner. The British Government did not exert itself to any great extent in the arming of our country, even after we had clashed into war with the most tremendous military power of all times.

Source 4 Chamberlain's Cabinet in 1940.



FACTFILE

Guilty Men

- *Guilty Men* was written by 'Cato' and published in July 1940. Cato was the name of a writer in ancient Rome who tried to improve life in the city.
- Cato was in fact three journalists (Michael Foot, Frank Owen and Peter Howard) who worked for Lord Beaverbrook.
- Although *Guilty Men* named 15 individuals, it was generally seen as a personal attack on Chamberlain and his policies.
- Beaverbrook had initially supported Appeasement but then turned against it completely once war broke out in 1939.
- When Churchill became prime minister in 1940, he asked Beaverbrook to join the government and made him minister of aircraft production.

Uncorrected proof

Source 5 US historians Frederik Lovegall and Kenneth Osgood, writing in 2010.

Americans have fixated on it for seven decades. "Munich" and "appeasement" have been among the dirtiest words in American politics. American presidents from Harry Truman on have projected an air of uncompromising toughness lest they be branded as appeasers by their political opponents. As Truman put it in 1948: "Appeasement leads only to further aggression and ultimately to war."

Source 6 British historian Derek Dutton, speaking in 2011.

Overall, 'Guilty Men' is less significant as an accurate assessment of Britain's political leadership in the 1930s than as a lasting influence on how people saw Appeasement. The book itself has few claims to historical scholarship. Even Michael Foot later admitted it was crude. Its black and white depiction of complex issues showed no understanding of the terrible dilemmas which confronted the policy makers of the 1930s, dilemmas to which there were no right answers.

- 1 Use the framework in the Focus Task on page 44 to summarise this interpretation.

Context

Many people felt ashamed of what had happened at Munich. When Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia, attitudes began to turn against Appeasement. These attitudes hardened after war broke out in 1939. Many wanted Chamberlain to be replaced as prime minister. These calls strengthened as the war went badly in the first few months. By May 1940, British forces had been defeated in Norway. Combined British and French forces were also defeated in France and the British army had to be evacuated. People were shocked and afraid that the Germans might invade.

They looked for a scapegoat and Chamberlain was an obvious choice. He resigned and Winston Churchill became the new prime minister. A bitter struggle followed between Churchill and the foreign secretary Lord Halifax (another of the appeasers). Halifax believed that Britain should make peace with Hitler, whereas Churchill wanted to keep fighting. For a time it looked as though Halifax had more support in the Cabinet and Churchill might be forced to resign. The powerful and influential newspaper publisher Lord Beaverbrook was a close friend of Churchill and strongly opposed Halifax. He published and promoted *Guilty Men* to help Churchill.

Impact

In the short term, *Guilty Men* had enormous impact. It helped Churchill to defeat Halifax, who left the government soon after. Churchill became the undisputed leader of Britain's war policy. In 1945, however, it also helped unseat Churchill himself. In the general election that year, the Labour Party exploited the fact that it was a Conservative government that had been responsible for Appeasement, even though the war hero Churchill was their leader (see Source 7). They used Churchill's own condemnation of Appeasement to condemn his party. This helped them win the election and further damaged Chamberlain's historical reputation.

In the longer term, this interpretation shaped the way people thought about Chamberlain and Appeasement for years to come. It turned Appeasement into a dirty word – something no political leader would ever want to be accused of, even in countries beyond Europe (see Source 5).

Source 7 Part of a Labour Party poster from the 1945 general election. Chamberlain is shown with Mussolini on the left and then Hitler on the right. Labour was careful not to criticise Churchill in the election campaign, just the rest of the Conservative Party.



Challenges

At the time there was virtually no challenge to this interpretation. However, later historians have been very critical of *Guilty Men* as a piece of historical writing.

Interpretation 3

Churchill's view, which became the 'orthodox' view

1948–60s

The appeasers misjudged Hitler

Appeasement was a terrible misjudgement and miscalculation, even if it was based on good motives.



Summary

The Second World War ended in 1945. Churchill lost the general election that year and devoted a lot of time to writing his history of the Second World War. The first volume, *The Gathering Storm*, was published in 1948. It was a best-seller and is still in print today.

Churchill took a slightly softer line on Chamberlain and Appeasement than *Guilty Men* had done. He was critical of Appeasement, but he did not say that Chamberlain had been weak or immoral. He argued that Chamberlain had been motivated by good intentions but that he had miscalculated and had misjudged Hitler.

Churchill also told the story in such a way that he appeared to be almost the only person to have opposed Appeasement in the 1930s. He claimed that Chamberlain should have tried to put together a 'grand alliance' of Britain, France, the USA and the USSR to stop Germany, Japan and Italy.

Interpretation 3 An extract from *The Gathering Storm* by Winston Churchill, published in 1948.

There was widespread and sincere admiration for Mr. Chamberlain's efforts to maintain peace. However, in writing this account it is impossible for me not to refer to the long series of miscalculations, and misjudgements which he made. The motives which inspired him have never been questioned. The course he followed required the highest degree of moral courage. To this I paid tribute two years later in my speech after his death.

Context

There are two important contexts for this interpretation, which are closely linked:

- **The 'Churchill Factor':** Churchill was well known for his self-promotion. In 1943, he actually said 'history will be kind to me because I shall write the history'. He was also bitterly disappointed at losing the 1945 general election and wanted to make sure his historical reputation did not suffer.
- **The Cold War:** At the end of the Second World War, two superpowers emerged – the USA and the USSR. Churchill was concerned about the USSR and saw it as a threat to Europe and the world. He believed that the USA and its allies (including Britain) should always stand up to Soviet leader Josef Stalin and not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Impact

It was not really true that Churchill was a lone voice in the 1930s. However, he had so much prestige after leading Britain through the war that his account became the accepted view – the orthodox interpretation of Appeasement. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s no *academic* historians challenged his account.

The Gathering Storm was also made into a TV documentary series in the 1960s (see Source 8) and influenced other TV and *popular* interpretations of the period.

Source 8 A review of a US TV documentary from 1960 called *Winston Churchill, the Valiant Years*. The first episode was based on Churchill's book *The Gathering Storm*. *'Winston Churchill – The Valiant Years'* holds promise of developing into a stimulating and engaging series. *'The Gathering Storm'*, first of 28 projected filmed episodes was shown last night. After tracing Sir Winston's family roots in America and Britain, the program moved rapidly through war's prologue period, from 1931 to 1939, when Churchill, a statesman in discard, a lone voice whose vibrant words were ignored, was forecasting the holocaust which Adolph Hitler would unleash.

Churchill's views influenced politicians as well. In fact, long after historians began to challenge Churchill's views politicians continued to be influenced by his account. For example, in the late 1940s and early 1950s US president Harry Truman took a very aggressive stance against the USSR, called the Truman Doctrine. In 1962, US president John F. Kennedy took the world to the brink of nuclear war with the USSR over Cuba. As late as 2003, British prime minister Tony Blair argued that it was important not to repeat the mistakes of Appeasement (see Source 9).

Source 9 British prime minister Tony Blair, commenting on Chamberlain in a speech in 2003. The main point of his speech was to persuade people that Britain should join the USA in invading Iraq that year.

In 1938 Chamberlain was a hero when he brought back the Munich Agreement and he did it for the best of motives. He had seen members of his own precious family, people he loved, die in the carnage of World War I. He strove for peace, not because he was a bad man. He was a good man. But he was a good man who made a bad decision.



Challenges

As with Interpretations 1 and 2, there were very few challenges to this interpretation at the time. But later historians have been critical of Churchill's version of events (see Source 10).

Source 10 British historian John Charmley, speaking in 2011.

The central flaw in Churchill's version of events is that it amounts to no more than an exercise in self-promotion. The sheer unlikelihood that everyone was out of step but our Winston is obscured by his iconic status as the man who won the war and as 'the prophet of truth' before it. His whole reading of events leading up to World War II was badly flawed, and looks good only with the advantage of hindsight. Only the coming of war made the Grand Alliance possible. It would have been impossible in the 1930s. It is also worth noting that that Chamberlain could hardly have been that bad a choice as prime minister because Churchill seconded his nomination for the post – a fact Churchill somehow left out of his memoirs.

1 Use the framework in the Focus Task on page 44 to summarise this interpretation.

Interpretation 4

Academic revisionist view

1960s–90s

Rehabilitating Chamberlain

Chamberlain was in an impossible position and he did the best that could have been done under the circumstances.

Interpretation 4A British historian Donald Cameron Watt, writing in 1965.

The Orthodox view of Appeasement is now definitely on trial. The disenchantment has not spread to politicians or the reading public in Britain and the United States. But within the academic world of professional historians it is no longer so widely or easily accepted. Historians are now concerned to understand the processes which German and British politicians went through and the different kinds of advice they were receiving and the pressures that were on them. This is a welcome change from the dismissal of all of those involved in Appeasement as stupid, weak and ill-informed.



Interpretation 4B An extract from *The Realities Behind Diplomacy* by British historian Paul Kennedy, writing in 1981.

Appeasement in 1938 was a natural policy for a small island state gradually losing its place in world affairs, shouldering military and economic burdens which were increasingly too great for it, and which as a democracy had to listen to the desire of its people for peace.

Summary

Churchill's orthodox interpretation remained influential from 1948 onwards, especially with the public and politicians. However, in the 1960s some historians began to question the orthodox view. Historians often do this when new evidence comes to light or simply when they have new ideas. This practice is known as REVISIONISM.

The first historian to question the orthodox view was A. J. P. Taylor in 1961. He argued that Hitler did not have a clear plan in the 1930s, he simply grasped opportunities as they came along. This meant that Chamberlain could not be entirely blamed for not knowing what Hitler planned – Hitler did not know himself. Most historians did not accept Taylor's view, but it did start a revisionist process.

In 1965, the historian Donald Cameron Watt argued that Chamberlain faced many different problems and Hitler was just one of them – he had very few options and very limited resources.

Later in the 1960s, historians carried out studies into many different aspects of the events of the time – the financial issues, the military concerns, relationships with the empire and many others. A revisionist interpretation emerged, which stated that there was little else Chamberlain could have done in 1937–38.

Some historians went further and argued that Appeasement was actually the right policy because it bought precious time for Britain to build up its armed forces and particularly its air defences and the Royal Air Force. The fact that Hitler so clearly proved himself to be untrustworthy and dangerous in 1939 also helped to unite the country. By 1939, most British people still did not want to go to war but they no longer believed in peace at any price. Some historians went as far as to praise Chamberlain for his handling of the situation.

Interpretation 4C An extract from an article called 'Appeasement Revisited' by British historian David Dilks, 1972.

Chamberlain should be defended as a master politician pursuing the best, perhaps the only, policy possible in the difficult circumstances of Britain's declining power. Not only was Chamberlain's policy sensible, popular and of long-standing, it was also skilfully executed: at Munich Hitler was out-manoeuvred. Subsequently British policy was to 'hope for the best and prepare for the worst'. When Hitler proved in March 1939 that he could not be trusted, Chamberlain's policy sensibly became one of deterrence and resistance. His careful handling of affairs through his whole premiership ensured that war came at the best possible juncture with the nation united and prepared.

Uncorrected proof

Context

There were three developments that help explain the emergence of the revisionist interpretation:

- **Radical thinking:** The 1960s was a time when many traditional views in society were being questioned. History was one of many areas where new ideas emerged.
- **The Vietnam War:** During the 1960s the USA's dislike of Appeasement had drawn them into a war in Vietnam, which was going badly. This seemed to suggest Appeasement may not have been a bad policy because Britain may have ended up in the same position.
- **New British sources:** Through the 1940s and 1950s historians relied on a fairly limited range of source materials, such as newspaper articles, private letters or interviews with key figures. But in 1958 the government passed the Public Records Act. This meant that official government papers could be studied 30 years after they were created. Previously the limit had been 50 years. This meant that by the late 1960s huge numbers of government documents became available. Historians were able to study documents from the Treasury, the armed forces, the Foreign Office and many other departments. This allowed them to get a detailed picture of the concerns that Chamberlain and his ministers had to face (shown below) and how seriously these concerns worried them.

Economic problems

Britain was still struggling with debts from the First World War, the effects of the Depression and unemployment. Britain could not afford a war. The Treasury blocked many of Chamberlain's plans to increase Britain's armed forces because of the cost.

Public opinion

For a democracy to fight a war successfully it needs the complete backing of its people. Chamberlain and his ministers did not believe the British people would support going to war in 1938.

The empire

The dominions (Britain's key allies in the British Empire – Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand) were unsure about war with Germany. At the same time, Britain was struggling to hold its empire together. It faced problems in Palestine, an independence movement in India and its possessions in the Far East were threatened by Japan.

The military

British military commanders indicated they were not confident that their armed forces, particularly on land and in the air, were a match for Germany in 1938.

The USA

Chamberlain and his ministers knew they could not count on the USA. The USA was still isolationist in its thinking and definitely not prepared to involve itself in European problems.

Fear of the USSR

Chamberlain's papers show he was concerned that Stalin as well as Hitler was a threat to Britain.

Impact

At this time, the debate had become an academic one not a popular one. Revisionist views did not have a huge impact on politicians or on public interpretations of Appeasement. Indeed the popular and political interpretation of Appeasement remained Churchill's (Interpretation 3). However these approaches *did* have an enormous impact among professional historians. After a relatively quiet period in which the orthodox interpretation was accepted, the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s saw many new studies and a lot of lively debate.

Challenges

It is the nature of history that each interpretation is re-evaluated by later historians. You can see how historians challenged the revisionist view in the 1990s in Interpretation 5 over the page.

- 1 Use the framework in the Focus Task on page 44 to summarise this interpretation.

Interpretation 5
Academic counter-revisionist view
1990s–2000s

Chamberlain back on trial

Chamberlain himself was part of the problem. His own personality and assumptions meant he could not deal satisfactorily with the situation.

Summary

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, some historians began to question the idea that Chamberlain had virtually no choice in his actions in the 1930s. In 1993, Robert Parker developed the first of what came to be known as the counter-revisionist accounts of the 1930s.

Other historians agreed with Parker. They did not go back to the *Guilty Men* interpretation or even the orthodox interpretation, but they did not accept that Chamberlain was completely at the mercy of the problems he faced. In other words, Chamberlain was at least partly responsible for Appeasement and its consequences. Their main arguments were as follows:

- Chamberlain overrated his own abilities and importance in thinking that he could talk Hitler into being reasonable.
- Chamberlain completely failed to understand Hitler because he was unable to change his own views about international relations.
- Chamberlain ignored the advice of many of his officials and colleagues.
- Whatever the reasons (including giving Britain time to rearm), Chamberlain did betray Czechoslovakia in 1938 and that he should be held responsible for that.

Context

The two main drivers of the counter-revisionist interpretation were:

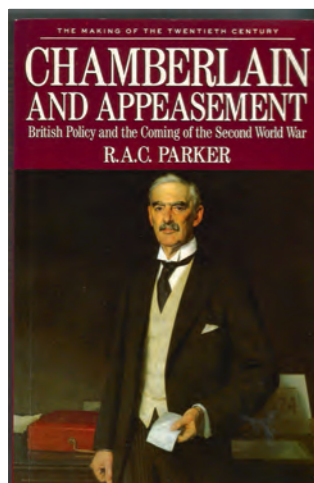
- **The historical debate:** It is an academic historian's job to disagree with earlier writers and challenge or refine their interpretation. A number of historians simply did not agree with the revisionist view because it let Chamberlain off the hook for Appeasement.
- **New Soviet sources:** In 1989, the Cold War ended and archives from the USSR began to be more available to historians. As well as Soviet documents, there were a lot of German documents that the Soviets had taken away when they captured Berlin at the end of the Second World War. These documents gave historians new insights into Appeasement, particularly the dealings between Hitler and Chamberlain.

Impact

The counter-revisionist view was not as dramatic as the orthodox or as controversial as the revisionist interpretation. As a result it did not have the same impact on politicians or the public. On the other hand, it continued to stir up debate among historians – and that debate still continues.

Some revisionist historians changed their view. For example, in 1991 revisionist historian Donald Cameron Watt argued that as well as the factors the revisionists emphasised, the behaviour and personality of Chamberlain also played a part. This is not unusual – historians often have to rethink their ideas as they research and find out more.

Interpretation 5 An extract from *Chamberlain and Appeasement: British Policy and the Coming of the Second World War* by British historian Robert Parker, 1993. Chamberlain succumbed to the temptation to believe that actions which were specifically his own were triumphing. Hitler helped. He appealed to Chamberlain's vanity and encouraged Chamberlain to think he had a special influence over him. Sir Neville Henderson, the British Ambassador in Berlin, encouraged Chamberlain even though he lost the confidence of his own colleagues in the Foreign Office. Chamberlain's appeasement was not a feeble policy of surrender. He never pursued 'peace at any price'. But he made big mistakes, especially after Munich. He could have built a strong alliance with France. He could have tried to ally with the USSR but he refused to try in any serious way. Chamberlain refused to listen to alternative views and his powerful personality probably stifled serious chances of preventing the Second World War.



Source 11 British historian Paul Kennedy, writing in 1993.

The early writers about appeasement were severely critical because it was a failure of morality and willpower. By contrast, most of the later works have concentrated instead upon the compelling strategic, economic and political motives behind the British Government's policy during the 1930s. In seeking to explain appeasement, however, they have also tended to justify it. Yet the fact remains that some Cabinet ministers recognised that the dictators would have to be opposed. By 1939 at least, making concessions to Germany was neither as logical nor as 'natural' as might have been the case in 1936 or 1926. Instead, it was increasingly viewed as a policy which lacked both practical wisdom and moral idealism, but it was still being pursued in Downing Street. Individual conviction – in this case, Chamberlain's – obviously plays a critical role here.

Challenges

The revisionists have not simply let the counter-revisionists walk all over them! One of the most powerful arguments they have used is to ask what alternatives were open to Chamberlain. Several historians have used counter-factual history to think about this. Counter-factual history involves trying to understand what *did* happen by considering what else *might* have happened.

For example, British historian Niall Ferguson used a complex computer-based historical simulation called *The Calm and the Storm* to test what might have happened if an alliance had been formed with France and the USSR and war declared in 1938. Source 12 is his conclusion.

Source 12 British historian Niall Ferguson writing in an article for the *New York Magazine*, 16 October 2006.

So how did my pre-emptive strategy stand up to a computer stress test? Not as well as I had hoped, I have to confess. The Calm & the Storm made it clear that lining up an anti-German coalition in 1938 might have been harder than I'd assumed. To my horror, the French turned down the alliance I proposed to them. It also turned out that, when I did go to war with Germany, my own position was pretty weak. The nadir [low point] was a successful German invasion of England, a scenario which my book [had ruled out] as militarily too risky!



Source 13 An extract from *Alternatives to Appeasement* by British historian Andrew Stedman, 2011.

It was easy to criticise Chamberlain from the side-lines. It was more difficult to suggest a constructive, coherent alternative. Critics were often confused and divided amongst themselves. One of Chamberlain's critics, Leo Amery, can be found in writing supporting at least four different approaches to dealing with Hitler.

So what were the other options open to Chamberlain?

- 1 Isolation and absolute pacifism
- 2 Economic and Colonial Appeasement [define]
- 3 League of Nations
- 4 Alliances
- 5 Armaments and Defence
- 6 War

All of these options were considered by Chamberlain. Some were rejected and some were actually tried. In his ultimate failure Chamberlain's achievements deserve to be recognised. It is difficult to believe that the Nazis could have been deterred. War was the regime's main aim. In failing to achieve peace Chamberlain did at least make clear where the blame lay. History should give him credit for this.

- 1 Use the framework in the Focus Task on page 44 to summarise this interpretation.

Uncorrected proof

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Assessment questions on the historical controversy will usually be either type A or type B:

Type A: How fair ...	Type B: Explain why ...
For example: 1 How fair is Interpretation A on Chamberlain? (25) or 2 How far do you accept the view of B on Appeasement? (25)	For example: 1 Explain why not all historians would agree with Interpretation C? (20) or 2 Do you think most historians and commentators would agree with Interpretation D? (20)

- 1 Choose one of these questions and prepare an answer based on that interpretation below.
- 2 Which would be a good question to ask about Interpretation E?

Interpretation A British historian Louise Shaw, writing in 1987.

To the dismay of his British colleagues and his French allies Chamberlain alone, motivated by his anti-Bolshevik prejudice, deliberately sabotaged the chance of an Anglo-Soviet alliance in 1939. Such an alliance would have been a workable solution for discouraging, or if necessary defeating, Hitler.

Interpretation B Conservative politician and political writer Lord Hailsham, speaking in 2008. He was a Conservative MP in 1938.

The question in September 1938 was whether we wanted war or whether we would give peace a chance – and it was just a chance. I was constantly being told that these dictators are only bullies and if you stand up to them they will run away. Well the one thing we do know is that that would not have happened. Hitler proved that. If we had gone to war in 1938 we would have fought with outdated biplanes instead of Hurricanes and Spitfires and I don't think the people were sufficiently united. For a democracy to fight a war you have to be united and the people were divided.

Interpretation C Historian Donald Cameron Watt, writing in 1991.

The personality of Chamberlain is central to the discussion of Appeasement. He had a rather inflated sense of his own judgement and abilities and was unwilling to listen to anyone but himself. It could be said that he saw himself acting in the name of God or history. This earned him the disapproval of his people and historians.

Interpretation D British historian Zara Steiner, writing in 2011.

The leaders of the democratic states assumed that all those playing the game shared and accepted certain essential principles. All should, and hence would, agree that peace was preferable to war and that negotiation was more productive than fighting. These views were hardly appropriate for dealing with the Nazis, the Fascists, or the militarist Japanese leadership. Men like Chamberlain and Daladier, as well as their foreign ministers, because of their personalities, upbringing, education, and beliefs barely understood a leader like Hitler. They, like so many others of the old élites, belonged to a world where statesmen made sensible choices, where rules and conventions were observed, and where men avoided bluff and reckless behaviour. The cataclysm of 1914–1918 had left the French and British leaders with the visceral horror of another war. Hitler suffered no such concerns.

Interpretation E Historian John Charmley, speaking in 2011.

'The Gathering Storm' has been one of the most influential books of our time. It is no exaggeration to claim that it has strongly influenced the behaviour of Western politicians from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush.

Its central theme – the futility of appeasement and the need to stand up to dictators – is one that has been taken for granted as a self-evident truth in Western society, both during the period of the Cold War and subsequently.

ASSESSMENT FOCUS

How the international relations study will be assessed

The international relations study will be examined in Paper 1, along with your chosen depth study. The international relations section is worth 65 marks – 30 per cent of your total GCSE. The questions could be on any part of the content, so you need to revise it all.

Questions 1 and 2 will test the first two assessment objectives:

- A01: knowledge and understanding
- A02: explanation and analysis.

Questions 3 and 4 will also test these objectives, but they will also test A03: interpretations.

Above all, the questions are designed to assess your ability to think and work like a historian. In the introduction, you looked at how historians work (page 4). There we set out some steps that historians take:

- 1 focus
- 2 ask questions
- 3 select
- 4 organise
- 5 fine tune.

The exam questions have already chosen a focus (stage 1) and they have asked questions (stage 2). What the examiner wants from you is stages 3, 4 and 5.

Question 1

Question 1 will usually ask you to outline or describe events from one section of the course. It is a simple knowledge question, usually requiring a description of three or four events in sequence. For example:

Outline the actions of Adolf Hitler in Europe in the 1930s. (5 marks)

Aim of the question

There are no tricks to this question. It is simply testing your knowledge. However, the examiner wants to see that you can *select* important events and *describe* them accurately. Selection is vital – this is not asking you to write down everything you know.

Advice

Select: Hitler carried out a range of actions in the 1930s. You only need three or four for a good mark. But remember it is an outline – you do not need every detail.

Organise: The main point in a question such as this is the logical sequence. So, you might want to describe Hitler's actions in the Rhineland, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

Fine tune: Make sure that your spellings and dates are correct. Make sure that your answer is clear – in the pressure of an exam it is easy to accidentally say something you do not mean to say.

Uncorrected proof

This answer has some good points. It would probably get two marks because it contains three relevant events.

However, it is not well organised. The answer is not in a logical sequence. The invasion of Poland is mentioned but not much more. The Rhineland is probably over-described and the Anschluss under-described.

To improve this answer, start with a clear framing statement, such as: 'In the 1930s Hitler pursued an aggressive foreign policy.' Then follow this with his actions that show this for example in the Rhineland, the Anschluss, Munich 1938 and Poland 1939 – in chronological order.

The Question 2 medal ceremony

Bronze (up to 25% of marks):

You describe the effects of the Depression but do not use these to answer the question – i.e. how these helped cause the war.

Silver (up to 60% of marks):

You describe how the Depression contributed to the war, but do not compare it with another factor.

Gold (up to 100% of marks):

You make it really clear how the Depression contributed to the war *and* compare it with another factor which caused the war *and* answer the question of how important the Depression was by comparing it with that other factor.

Even a Gold medal answer can be improved by ensuring you have:

- a clear conclusion that rounds off your argument
- supporting evidence: using relevant and detailed knowledge to support each point you make
- a balanced answer that shows you understand that there might be more than one view about the question or explains how the different factors are connected.

Example answer

Hitler started the Second World War in 1939 when he invaded Poland. In 1936, Hitler moved German forces into the Rhineland area of Germany. This was banned under the Treaty of Versailles. The British and French failed to stop him even though they were supposed to do so under the terms of the Treaty. They did not entirely agree about what to do about Hitler and had a number of arguments about it. In 1938, Germany joined Austria in the Anschluss.

Question 2

Question 2 will usually demand more analysis and explanation than Question 1. It will ask you about the *importance* or *impact* of a factor, or *how successful* an organisation was. For example:

How important was the Depression in causing the Second World War? (10 marks)

Aim of the question

Examiners want you to produce a balanced answer. They want you to state your view strongly and clearly, but you need to acknowledge that there could be another view, even if you disagree with it. They want you to consider the factor mentioned in the question but also compare it with another factor. You have to answer the question 'How important was ...' but explain *why you think what you think*. Think of it like an Olympic medal ceremony.

Advice

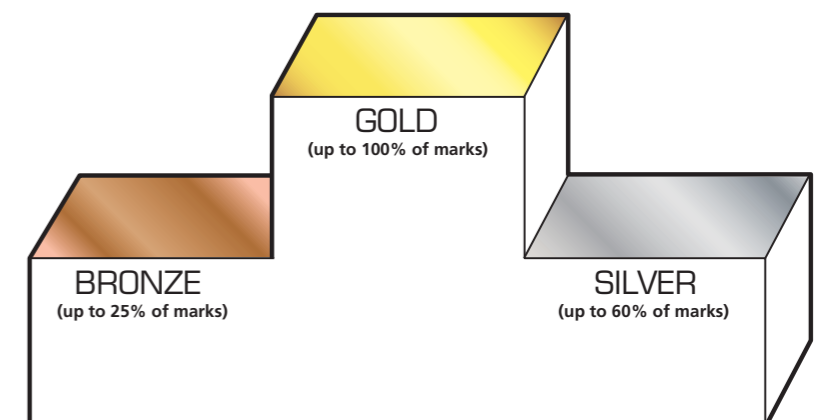
Select: Focus on the effects of the Depression, not its causes, and obviously how these effects (e.g. unemployment) helped to cause war. Select one other cause to compare it with (e.g. Hitler's policies, the actions of Britain and France).

Organise: The important thing is to organise your knowledge in a relevant way to answer the question. In this question, a good way to organise your answer might be:

Example answer

The Depression was a very important cause of the Second World War but I do not believe it was the main cause. The Depression did contribute to war by ... However, another factor was the policies of Adolf Hitler from 1936 to 1939. I believe this was a bigger factor because ...

Fine tune: Do all the usual checking, but make sure you say which of your reasons you think is more important.



Example answer

This is definitely a 'gold medal' answer and would probably get nine or ten marks.

It has a clear opening and it then sticks to the line that the opening suggests it will follow.

There is a good analysis of the Depression, which is specified in the question. (You would be amazed how many answers miss out the issue specified in the question!)

Then there is a good analysis of another cause. Of course there are other causes that could have been included but do not be tempted to go into them all. This question only requires you to look at two. It could also have been answered by comparing the Depression with Appeasement or with the failures of the League of Nations.

There is not much need to improve this answer. It could possibly explain why Japan was hit so hard (e.g. silk exports collapsed), but otherwise this is very good.

Interpretation A US historian Herbert Feis writing in 1957.

Soviet actions showed they were prepared to ignore the democratic votes of Eastern Europe's people. They also showed a ruthless will to make sure that all of Central and Eastern Europe was governed by its allies. This purpose clearly contradicted the vision of the United Nations Organisation of a world in which all countries would join together to protect each and to maintain peace. The Soviet Union wanted space, satellite peoples and armies, additional economic resources, and a favourable chance for Communism to spread its influence.

The Depression was a very important cause of the Second World War but I do not believe it was the main cause. The Depression did contribute to war by breaking down international trade between countries. To protect their own industries the USA and other countries brought in trade barriers called tariffs. This made imports from Europe and Japan more expensive. It was meant to protect US industries, but most other countries did the same thing and it caused a lot of resentment and mistrust. The Depression damaged internationalism and that in turn helped to cause the Second World War, as Germany, Italy and Japan all tried to build empires to help rebuild their economies and gain power.

However, another factor was the policies of Adolf Hitler from 1936 to 1939. I believe this was a much bigger factor. It is quite likely that the Depression on its own would not have caused the Second World War. However, it is very likely that Hitler would have caused the war even without the Depression. He was determined to build Lebensraum for Germany and that would have made a war with the USSR inevitable at some point. Hitler also acted very aggressively in other parts of Europe. For example, he forced Czechoslovakia to hand over the Sudetenland in 1938 and then went on to invade the rest of Czechoslovakia in 1939.

In conclusion, I believe that Hitler was a more important factor than the Depression because of the nature of his plans. However, we have to accept that without the Depression, Hitler might not have come to power in Germany in the first place so there are important links between these two causes.

Assess yourself

We gave this answer a Gold medal. You can use the same idea to assess your own answers. Which medal might you award yourself?

Question 3

Question 3 will usually ask you 'how fair' the view of a historian is or 'how far you agree' with a particular interpretation. You will be given an extract that sets out a particular interpretation and you will be asked to base your answer on that extract. For example:

Study Interpretation A.

Do you think this interpretation is a fair comment on the policies of the USSR in the years following the Second World War? Use your knowledge and other interpretations of the events of the period to support your answer. (24 marks)

Aim of the question

Examiners want you to show you understand the interpretation and that you can evaluate it by seeing how far events and developments of the time, and the work of other historians, support or challenge it. Evaluation is probably the trickiest part of the assessment. Do not fall into the trap of simplistic comments like 'Historian X said this because he is Russian' or 'He might not have had all the sources'. This question demands more than that. Use as many of the tools in our evaluation 'toolkit' as you can.

The Question 3 'Evaluation toolkit'

Evaluation is probably the trickiest part of the assessment. Don't fall into the trap of simplistic comments like 'Historian X said this because he is Russian' or 'He might not have had all the sources'. This question demands more than that. Use as many of these evaluation 'tools' as you can:

Tool A The context of the historian: This is the context in which the historian is writing, not the events they are writing about. Think about how events of that period, or the personal views or experiences of the historian, influenced the way they interpreted events.

The Question 3 medal ceremony

Bronze (up to 25% of marks):

You state why the interpretation is or is not fair, supported by knowledge of one or two events (e.g. 'It is fair. The Soviets did set up communist governments in eastern Europe.')

Silver (up to 60% of marks):

You summarise the main argument in the interpretation, followed by explanation of why it is fair or unfair, using one of tools A, B or C.

Gold (up to 100% of marks):

You write a clear summary of the main argument in the interpretation, followed by an explanation of why it is fair (using at least two of tools A, B, C) and why it is unfair (using at least two of tools A, B or C).

Even a Gold medal answer can be improved by ensuring you have:

- a valid conclusion that rounds off your argument
- a good range of different historians views in your answer
- clearly explaining why historians hold particular views.

This answer is very good – a Gold medal again! It would probably get about 21–22 marks.

The opening is a strong analysis of the interpretation. The candidate clearly understands what the historian is arguing. This then sets up the rest of the answer.

One paragraph explains why the evaluation might be seen as fair. This is sensible. It uses Tool B and Tool C well.

The next paragraph sets out the alternative view using Tools A and B. These do not need a great amount of detail. Although examiners do not insist on you knowing the names of historians or groups (e.g. revisionists), using them will make the answer seem more confident.

Probably the only thing missing from this answer is a conclusion. It would be interesting to see which side of the argument the candidate found more convincing and why.

For example, they might have argued that it is not convincing because it was just not possible for Feis to take an objective view and that since other US historians disagreed with him that explains

Tool B The views of other historians: Use the views of other historians who have agreed with or criticised the original view or suggested alternative interpretations.

Tool C Relevant factual knowledge: Use your knowledge of specific events or developments to support or challenge any claim made by the historian.

Advice

Before you start: Be sure to read the interpretation carefully. It might be quite complex but you need to know exactly what it says to write a good answer.

Select: You need to select facts, events and developments that support or challenge the view in the interpretation. This interpretation focuses mainly on Soviet policy in eastern Europe, so it makes sense to select items from this part of your knowledge wardrobe.

Organise: A good way to start this question is to show you understand what the interpretation is saying. You will not get a lot of marks for this but it will give the examiner confidence that you know what you are doing. Then write a paragraph that explains how the interpretation might be seen as fair. Use at least two of the evaluation tools to do this. Then do the same thing to explain why the interpretation might not be seen as fair.

Fine tune: Do all the usual checking, but here it is worth making sure you used at least two of the three evaluation methods. You will get more credit for using Tools A and B than Tool C.

In this extract Herbert Feis is basically saying that all of the tensions and problems in the late 1940s were the fault of the USSR. He says that they ruthlessly took control of eastern Europe and did not allow democratic elections and that the USSR simply wanted to control eastern Europe as a base to spread communism further.

In some ways this interpretation could be seen as fair. Feis claims that the USSR did not allow eastern Europe to hold democratic elections. This is basically true. Soviet leader Stalin installed a communist government in East Germany under Walter Ulbricht – a communist trained in Moscow. He also used the Red Army and Cominform to make sure that communist governments came to power in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. This view is supported by other US historians. For example, in the 1950s George Kennan accused the Soviets of being liars and deceivers and wanting to dominate the world. In the 1970s, US historian John Lewis Gaddis argued that the Cold War was the fault of the USSR, although he was not quite as harsh as Feis and he believed that the USA should accept some responsibility.

On the other hand it could be argued that this interpretation is not fair. To begin with, we should look at Feis himself. At the time of the events he is writing about he was an adviser to the US government, so he cannot really be seen as an impartial observer. He was facing up to the Soviets in the late 1940s and helped to create US policy, so it seems likely that he would defend US policy at that time and criticise the Soviets and blame them for the tensions. Many US historians have criticised views like Interpretation A. For example, Thomas Paterson writing in the 1970s essentially argued that the USA was at least as much to blame for the Cold War. Paterson and other revisionist historians were writing at a time when the Vietnam War was coming to an end. That war changed the attitudes of many people in the USA and made them question whether the Americans really were 'the good guys'.

Uncorrected proof

The Question 4 medal ceremony**Bronze (up to 25% of marks):**

You have listed or described some similar or different views on the issue.

Silver (up to 60% of marks):

You have written a clear summary of the main argument in the interpretation, followed by a description of two examples of contrasting views.

Gold (up to 100% of marks):

You have written a clear summary of the main argument in the interpretation, followed by a description and explanation (i.e. how different *and* why different) of at least two examples of contrasting views.

Even a Gold medal answer can be improved by ensuring you have:

- a valid conclusion that rounds off your argument
- a good range of different historians' views in your answer
- clearly explaining why historians hold particular views
- shown awareness of the degree of difference (interpretations might partially agree or partially disagree)
- offered some evaluation of the interpretation you have been given.

Question 4

Question 4 also focuses on interpretation. It also provides you with an extract but compared to Question 3, this question is less focused on evaluation and is more about showing your knowledge of the different interpretations and how they changed.

Interpretation B British prime minister Tony Blair, commenting on Chamberlain in a speech in 2003.

In 1938 Chamberlain was a hero when he brought back the Munich Agreement and he did it for the best of motives. He had seen members of his own precious family, people he loved, die in the carnage of World War I. He strove for peace, not because he was a bad man. He was a good man. But he was a good man who made a bad decision.

Explain why not all historians and commentators have agreed with this interpretation. Use other interpretations and your knowledge to support your answer.

The aim of the question

This question is asking you to show that you understand the interpretation and also to survey the differing views on the issue. It does not require the kind of evaluation demanded in Question 3. The question asks why not all historians and commentators would not agree, so you need to know about other interpretations and reasons for the differences. Here is a Question 4 checklist:

- Compare with other interpretations.
- Explain the reasons for similarities and differences (which will usually be because of the evidence they were using or the contexts in which historians were writing).
- Survey changing interpretations of this issue – i.e. tell the story of the story.
- Explain the reasons for those changes (again, this is usually new evidence or changing contexts in which historians were writing).

Advice

Before you start: Be sure to read the interpretation carefully. It might be quite complex but you need to know exactly what it says to write a good answer.

Select: Selection is extremely important in this question. There is so much that you could say. You need to select examples of interpretations from historians, politicians, journalists or popular interpretations that *disagree* with Blair. You do not need to explore which interpreters would agree.

Organise: A good way to start this question is to show you understand what the Interpretation is saying. You won't get a lot of marks for this but it will give the examiner confidence that you know what you are doing. After that you have a choice. You could either take a chronological approach and explain how particular historians at particular times would have disagreed with Blair. Alternatively, you could focus on the issues that Blair raises – Chamberlain being a good man and Appeasement being a bad policy – and explain how historians disagreed with them.

Fine tune: Do all the usual checking, but here it is worth making sure you have said what you think about the question. In questions like this, a conclusion usually means:

- summarising the main reasons for disagreement *or*
- focusing on Blair's intentions.

Uncorrected proof

Example answer

This is a very full and thorough answer.

It gives a good analysis of Blair's interpretation and then three really good examples of historians who would disagree. Two would probably have been enough. These are especially good because they show understanding of the partial agreement/disagreement.

The only improvement might have been to pull paragraphs 2 and 4 together as they both cover the same theme.

In this interpretation, Tony Blair is arguing that Neville Chamberlain was a good man and carried out the policy of Appeasement with the best of intentions. Blair also argues that even though he was treated as a hero at the time his policy was a terrible mistake and he should have gone to war with Hitler. Many historians and commentators would have agreed with Blair that Chamberlain was treated as a hero. However, there would be a lot of disagreement about what Blair says about Chamberlain as a man, and about his policies.

In the 1940s, historians like Cato would have disagreed that Chamberlain was a good man. In fact Cato lists him as one of the 'Guilty Men' responsible for Britain doing so badly in the war in 1940. However, Cato would have agreed with Blair that Appeasement was a bad policy.

In the 1960s, historians would not have completely agreed with Blair. Revisionist historians like Donald Cameron Watt began to question the view that Appeasement was a bad policy. They began to argue that Chamberlain made the best of a very bad situation because he faced a huge range of problems and had very few alternatives. The revisionists were influenced by events of the 1960s. The 1960s was a time when many traditional views in society were being questioned. History was one of many areas where new ideas emerged. Also, during the 1960s the US dislike of the Appeasement had drawn them into a war in Vietnam which was going badly. This seemed to suggest Appeasement may not have been a bad policy because Britain may have ended up in the same position. Through the 1940s and 1950s historians had to rely on a fairly limited range of source materials such as newspaper articles, private letters or interviews with key figures. But in 1958 the government passed the Public Records Act. This meant that official government papers could be studied 30 years after they were created. Previously the limit had been 50 years. So, by the late 1960s, huge numbers of government documents had become available. Historians were able to study documents from the Treasury, the armed forces, the Foreign Office and many other departments. This allowed them to get a detailed picture of the concerns that Chamberlain and his ministers had to face and how seriously they considered these to be.

In the 1990s, there were new views about Appeasement. Many counter-revisionist historians would have agreed with Blair about Appeasement being a bad policy but they would have disagreed about him being a good man. Historians like Robert Parker argued that Chamberlain overrated his own abilities and importance in thinking that he could talk Hitler into being reasonable, and that Chamberlain ignored the advice of many of his officials and colleagues. Parker also argues that whatever the reasons (including giving Britain time to rearm), Chamberlain did betray Czechoslovakia in 1938 and that he should be held responsible for that.