



AS HISTORY 7041/1L

The quest for political stability: Germany, 1871–1991
Component 1L Empire to democracy, 1871–1929

Mark scheme

June 2025

Version: 1.0 Final



Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

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Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity, you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level, you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly Level 3 with a small amount of Level 4 material it would be placed in Level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the Level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Section A

- 0 1** With reference to these extracts and your understanding of the historical context, which of these two extracts provides the more convincing interpretation of political authority in Germany in the years 1871 to 1890?

[25 marks]*Target: AO3*

Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a good understanding of the interpretations given in the extracts. They will evaluate the extracts thoroughly in order to provide a well-substantiated judgement on which offers the more convincing interpretation. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the interpretations given in the extracts. There will be sufficient comment to provide a supported conclusion as to which offers the more convincing interpretation. However, not all comments will be well-substantiated, and judgements may be limited. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. **16–20**
- L3:** The answer will show a reasonable understanding of the interpretations given in the extracts. Comments as to which offers the more convincing interpretation will be partial and/or thinly supported. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer will show some partial understanding of the interpretations given in the extracts. There will be some undeveloped comment in relation to the question. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. **6–10**
- L1:** The answer will show a little understanding of the interpretations given in the extracts. There will be only unsupported, vague or generalist comment in relation to the question. The response demonstrates limited understanding of context. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Students must assess the extent to which the interpretations are convincing by drawing on contextual knowledge to corroborate and challenge the interpretations/arguments/views.

In their identification of the argument in Extract A, students may refer to the following:

- the main argument is that the Reichstag played a significant role in the governing of Germany in this period
- Bismarck had to negotiate with the representatives of the people in the Reichstag in order to get the laws passed that he wanted
- the influence of the Reichstag led to liberalism and democratic thought being significant influences on the government of Germany in this period.

In their assessment of the extent to which the arguments are convincing, students may refer to the following:

- Bismarck constantly had to seek favourable alignments with the parties of the Reichstag in order to implement his policies. Initially, this was with the National Liberals in the 1870s, before he manufactured a new alliance in 1878/79 with the conservative parties and the Centre in favour of protective tariffs
- in 1881, when faced by a hostile Reichstag, Bismarck talked openly about a coup to create a more authoritarian constitution. These plans got nowhere in the face of opposition from the democratic parties. Subsequently, in the 1880s, Bismarck pursued social welfare policies, which could easily be described as liberal and democratic in nature
- in opposition to the extract, it could be argued that the period was still dominated more by nationalism and authoritarianism. In 1878 and 1887, Bismarck called early elections and manipulated the campaigns along authoritarian (1878) or nationalistic (1887) lines. The anti-socialist laws from 1878 give the impression of an authoritarian state in action.

In their identification of the argument in Extract B, students may refer to the following:

- the main argument is that the appearance of constitutionalism and democracy in Germany was a false impression and that the reality was of an authoritarian not a democratic government
- Prussia dominated the new Reich, which had been created by the 1871 constitution
- the Reichstag had no direct authority over the chancellor or ministers, who were answerable only to the Kaiser.

In their assessment of the extent to which the arguments are convincing, students may refer to the following:

- Prussia had 17 members of the Bundesrat, and 14 votes were sufficient to exercise a veto. Furthermore, the Prussian king was the German Kaiser, and the Prussian prime minister was the chancellor of the Reich. Prussia's political traditions were authoritarian, as evidenced by the influence of the Prussian army and the three-tier voting system
- the parties in the Reichstag did not prove to be a significant limiting influence on Bismarck. He used the parties when it suited him, eg with the National Liberals over further unification and the Kulturkampf in the 1870s, but ditched them when they began to oppose new priorities. Until 1890, the parties rarely worked together effectively to resist Bismarck's political dominance

- in opposition to the extract, it could be argued that it underplays the significance of the Reichstag's constitutional position to a degree. There was never a realistic possibility of 'true parliamentary government' in this period, but Bismarck did have to adapt his policies and priorities to win a majority in the Reichstag for new legislation, and opposition there in 1890 contributed to his downfall.

In arriving at a judgement as to which extract provides the more convincing interpretation, students might conclude that Bismarck created the 1871 constitution to give himself the central role in controlling government policy and managing the Reichstag. He proved to be hugely skilful in manipulating this role to achieve his goals and therefore Extract B may be the more convincing interpretation. Alternatively, however, students may argue that Extract B overstates the authoritarian nature of German government in this period and that Extract A introduces an important perspective focused on the role of the Reichstag and its constitutional powers to approve or reject proposed legislation.

Section B

- 0 2** 'The traditional, aristocratic elites retained their social and political dominance in the years 1890 to 1914.'

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment leading to substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be analytical comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance. However, there may be some generalisation and judgements will be limited and only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** The answer will show some understanding of the full demands of the question and the answer will be adequately organised. There will be appropriate information showing an understanding of some key features and/or issues but the answer may be limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some comment in relation to the question. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer will be descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments supporting the view that the traditional, aristocratic elites retained their social and political dominance in the years 1890 to 1914 might include:

- the Kaiser's court was dominated by the traditional elites and the chancellors of this period were all from landowning, aristocratic backgrounds. The higher ranks of the civil service were also dominated by those from similar backgrounds, meaning that the machinery of government was directed by the traditional elites
- the Junker landowning class retained significant influence over government policy in relation to agriculture. When Caprivi lowered tariffs, opposition from the newly formed Agrarian League, which was dominated by the aristocratic landed interest, contributed to bringing about his resignation. Tariffs were subsequently restored by Bülow in 1902, and remained in place to 1914
- the aristocratic elites continued to dominate the officer corps of the military and exerted significant influence over the Kaiser, leading to the dramatic expansion of both the army and navy. The influence of the military over the Kaiser's government only strengthened after 1908 and was revealed openly through the Zabern Affair of 1913
- the aristocratic elites continued to dominate the upper echelons of society. The newly enriched industrial elites aimed to gain access to these elite social circles and imitated the values and customs of the aristocracy to gain social status. There was much co-operation between the traditional and industrial elites through right-wing pressure groups, such as the Pan-German League.

Arguments challenging the view that the traditional, aristocratic elites retained their social and political dominance in the years 1890 to 1914 might include:

- the dominance of the traditional landowning elites was coming under pressure due to the economic shift away from agriculture and towards industry. Agricultural incomes were falling and some, especially in the east of the Reich, were forced to sell their estates to socially ambitious upper-middle-class families who had earned significant wealth from industrialisation
- rapid industrialisation greatly increased the size of the middle classes, from the relatively modest Mittelstand to an upper-middle class of managers, technical experts and professionals. Across Germany, but especially in the growing urban areas, new bourgeois forms of culture and social behaviour were becoming pre-eminent
- rapid industrialisation caused significant urbanisation and growth of the working classes. As a result, the SPD grew to become the largest party in the Reichstag by 1912. In response, the traditional elites were forced to accommodate demands from the representatives of the workers, such as extensions to social welfare and payment for Reichstag deputies
- the growth of liberalism and socialism, due to the increase in size of both the middle and working classes, meant that the Reichstag became harder to manage for the traditional ruling classes in government. In 1913, the conservative elites were forced to accept a special 'defence tax' on property in order to fund the proposed increase in the size of the army.

In arriving at an overall judgement, students may argue that the aristocratic elites still retained a huge amount of social and political influence, which was well beyond their strength in numbers and their economic significance. Although it was becoming harder to maintain, this dominance was still intact by 1914, largely due to their pre-eminence in government, the civil service and the armed forces. Culturally and socially too, the values and attitudes of the aristocratic elites continued to dominate the upper ranks of society. Alternatively, however, students may argue that the dominance of the traditional elites was under genuine strain by 1914 as they found it hard to manage an increasingly hostile Reichstag and negative public opinion, as seen in the aftermath of the Zabern incident. The desperation of the elites to

maintain their dominance, especially through their continued grip on the military, could be seen as a reason why Germany went to war in 1914, as they hoped to unite an increasingly divided country through patriotism.

- 0 3** 'In the years 1919 to 1929, left-wing and right-wing extremists did not pose a significant threat to Weimar democracy.'

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment leading to substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be analytical comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance. However, there may be some generalisation and judgements will be limited and only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** The answer will show some understanding of the full demands of the question and the answer will be adequately organised. There will be appropriate information showing an understanding of some key features and/or issues but the answer may be limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some comment in relation to the question. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer will be descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments supporting the view that in the years 1919 to 1929, left-wing and right-wing extremists did not pose a significant threat to Weimar democracy might include:

- the Ebert-Groener Pact ensured that communist-inspired risings, between 1919 and 1923, were relatively easily crushed. The Spartacists, the Bavarian Soviet Republic and the Ruhr Rising were all crushed by the combined forces of the army and the Freikorps in 1919–20. Further left-wing political violence in 1921 and 1923, in Saxony and Hamburg, was also suppressed by the army
- the KPD lacked the internal organisation and strength of leadership to mount a serious and coordinated challenge to the Weimar Republic. The majority of the workers remained loyal to the SPD. From 1923, the KPD decided to contest elections, demonstrating that they had abandoned revolutionary goals and had accepted the new democratic Republic, at least for the time being
- right-wing attempts to seize power, most notably in the Kapp Putsch (1920) and the Munich Putsch (1923) were also relatively easily overcome. The general strike called by the government rendered the Kapp Putsch ineffectual and it collapsed after just a few days. The army helped to suppress the Nazis' attempt to seize power in Munich, which ended after just a few hours
- the stabilisation of the republic from 1923 onwards, under the guidance of Stresemann, reduced the appeal of extremist politics. In the 1928 election, over 70% of votes were cast for parties standing in favour of the democratic republican system. The Nazis won just 2.6% of the vote and only 12 seats in the Reichstag.

Arguments challenging the view that in the years 1919 to 1929, left-wing and right-wing extremists did not pose a significant threat to Weimar democracy might include:

- the new democratic government was forced from Berlin by the communist Spartacist Rising of January 1919. The government was only able to restore its control over its own capital city by relying on the actions of the Freikorps, who themselves were not committed to the new democracy. The democratic government seemed to be at the mercy of extremist forces
- similarly, the Ruhr Rising and the Kapp Putsch coincided in 1920 as the struggle between left-wing and right-wing extremists seemed to overwhelm the democratic government again. The government was forced to evacuate Berlin for a second time by Kapp, and lost control of its most important industrial area for a month to a force of 50 000 armed workers in the Red Ruhr Army
- between 1920 and 1923, high profile political assassinations were carried out by groups such as Organisation Consul. Further, the Munich Putsch was supported by Ludendorff – a respected figure – and Hitler gained great notoriety from his trial. The lenient treatment of many right-wing extremists by sympathetic judges sent a clear message about a lack of support for the republic
- despite the improved stability and prosperity of the Stresemann years, 1924–29, the communist KPD consistently polled around 10% of the votes and won more votes than Stresemann's own party in 1928. Although Germany appeared calmer and more stable on the surface, the threat of political extremism had not vanished and could easily resurface should conditions change.

In reaching an overall judgement, students may argue, in line with the traditional interpretation of these years, that the Weimar government was seriously threatened by political extremism in the years 1919 to 1923, however, this threat receded from 1924 and, therefore by 1929, the democratic system seemed to be strong and stable. However, students may argue that the threat from the extremist parties between 1919 and 1923 has been exaggerated and that support for the new republic amongst the working class and the army enabled it to overcome the threats posed relatively easily. Therefore, the new democracy was never seriously threatened. However, it could also be argued that the threat from political extremism was always present and serious throughout this period and that many people's commitment

to the new democratic system was fragile, and that a new period of disruption could easily cause the resurgence of political extremism and the potential collapse of democracy.