

# The Specimen History questions: what am I being asked to do?

Place historical material in its relevant context.

Extract and classify information from a variety of sources (DBQ)

Assess the values and limitations of available evidence

Show unity and diversity ; similarities and differences

Support arguments with use of pertinent and precise examples

# Essay # 1

## *Theme 1*

### **Democracy in danger : the crisis of capitalism, the threat of totalitarianism and the road to World War Two**

Explain why, in the 1930s, the great democratic powers were reluctant to defend the liberal world order they had created at Versailles. How far do you agree that the rise of totalitarianism was the most important underlying cause of the slide towards war in 1939?

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Identify the two parts of the essay question

/8 marks

/12 marks

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## **Explain why**

*What am I being asked to do? What does it mean?*

- Make plain?
- Account for?
- Clarify?
- Elucidate?
- Interpret?
- State the « How » and « Why »?
- Spell out the material I present, giving reasons for important features or developments?

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**Identify the period of time/places/areas related to the question**

**Define key terms (reference to the syllabus)**

*Personal questions: What? When? Where? Who? Why? + How?*

- Versailles Treaty
- The great democratic powers
- Liberal World order
- In the 1930s (events)
- Hesitations to defend (reluctant)

- The Versailles Treaty, a new international order (studied in 1<sup>ère</sup>)
- The great democratic powers during the 1930s (USA, Britain, France, ...): domestic affairs / international relations
- How effective was the League of Nations during the period ?
- How important was appeasement in the road to war?
- 1 or 2 case studies (e.g.: discussion points in the syllabus, theme one)

Explain why, in the 1930s, the great democratic powers were reluctant to defend the liberal world order they had created at Versailles. **How far do you agree that the rise of totalitarianism was the most important underlying cause of the slide towards war in 1939?**

### **How far do you agree?**

- More evaluative than narrative (not just a description)
- Most are likely to agree, but disagreement is possible
- Student can choose his/her own approach
- Provide the grounds for his/her point of view
- Look closely into something
- Investigate and examine by careful arguments?
- Criticize?
- Debate the case and possibly consider any alternatives? Make an appraisal of the worth of something in the light of its truth or utility?
- Emphasize the views of authorities (e.g.: debates amongst historians) as well as student personal estimation?
- Present his/her evidence in a convincing form?

Explain why, in the 1930s, the great democratic powers were reluctant to defend the liberal world order they had created at Versailles. **How far do you agree that the rise of totalitarianism was the most important underlying cause of the slide towards war in 1939?**

### **The most important underlying cause**

- Some students may question “most important”: a minor cause / very important cause?

### **Underlying**

- on the basis of assumptions
- Investigate and examine by careful arguments (“How far” question)

### **The slide towards war in 1939**

- Comment and evaluate key events in the 1930s until 1939



## **Introduction**

State what you will demonstrate in the essay

Identify the period of time/places/areas related to the question

Define key terms and your thesis

## **Body**

Offers historical / geographical evidence

## **Conclusion**

Restate the thesis in response to the question

You summarize your arguments

You add a final thought