

APPROACHING THE TEACHING OF UNIT 1

- » Unit 1 has several very important characteristics:
 - it covers a lengthy period of History as it fulfils the national criteria that History has to be studied in breadth at both AS and A level
 - it focuses entirely on assessing understanding of key historical concepts as laid down in Assessment Objective 1
 - its focus is on skills rather than on content and facts
- » It is stressed that all the content in each option has to be taught, although it is equally stressed that the content does not have to be taught in depth.

ADVICE ON APPROACHING THE CONTENT OF UNIT 1 PERIOD STUDY 8

In order to manage the content of Period Study 8 it is recommended that teachers look to use a general overview of important individuals, events, terms, and dates that are essential to understanding each topic or issue. It is vital to stress that the Period Study should be looked at as a whole and where appropriate, links and connections should be made between and across features and characteristics.

One possible way of managing the content of this option is to approach each main topic through discussion. Beginning and ending the study of each topic or issue with discussions or debates helps to focus attention on significant features associated with the topic or issue. This should help learners focus their attention on what matters most in the period studied.

Teachers should make use of the range of suggested discussions as a means of organising their approach to the content of the specification but should not assume or expect that examination questions will be set directly or solely based on any of the discussions suggested below.

The content of Period Study 8 can be managed by engaging in a series of discussions or debates. Suggestions include:

- Analyse the main causes of conflict in Europe in the period 1890-1914
- Evaluate the success of attempts at European co-operation in the period 1890-1939
- Analyse the main causes of conflict in Europe in the period 1919-1939
- Discuss the impact of Fascist rule upon Italy in the period 1922-1944
- Discuss the reasons why Germany made the transition from democracy to dictatorship in the period 1918-1934
- Analyse the impact of the Nazis upon Germany in the period 1929-1945
- Outline the ways in which the control of Russia changed between 1905-1924
- Discuss the impact of Communist rule upon Russia in the period 1924-1945
- Analyse the ways in which the Cold War affected Europe after 1945
- Evaluate the success of attempts at European co-operation in the period 1945-1991

ACTIVITY 1: USING ILLUSTRATIONS TO DISCUSS CONCEPTS

ADVICE ON THE USE OF THIS ACTIVITY

In order to introduce and debate some of the suggested discussions in this option it is possible to use illustrations to introduce or develop understanding of some of the issues. Most of the specified content covered in this option can be introduced, developed, debated or reviewed using illustrations. These can be cartoons, paintings, prints or maps. Below is an example which focuses on discussing the concept of **importance**.

The cartoon below is entitled *Clemenceau the Vampire* and was published in Germany in July 1919. Use the cartoon to begin a discussion of the main threats to the stability of the Weimar Republic between 1918-1933



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ACTIVITY 2: RAG-rate the key features and characteristics

ADVICE ON THE USE OF THIS ACTIVITY

For each of the suggested discussions given above, learners should be able to analyse and evaluate a range of features and characteristics associated with each one. For example, these can be considered for their importance or significance in each issue. To start this process, learners could use three coloured highlighters to put a Red, Amber or Green star next to each feature.

Red: Features that have little relevance to the enquiry

Amber: Features that have some relevance to the enquiry

Green: Features which are directly relevant to the enquiry.

Related activities would be to use coloured highlighters to identify these features and characteristics in relation to:

Time – are they long term or short term factors?

Perspective – are they political, economic, social, individual factors or a combination of these?

Here is an example of a suggested discussion:

Analyse the ways in which the Cold War affected Europe after 1945

Rag-rate the following features and characteristics associated with this discussion:

- Yalta and Potsdam
- The post war division of Germany
- Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech
- Truman Doctrine
- Marshall Plan
- Berlin Blockade
- The creation of NATO
- Mutual distrust and misunderstanding between the USA and USSR

- Atomic diplomacy
- Greater Western European economic co-operation
- Setting up of Comecom
- Creation of the Berlin Wall

Now repeat the activity for any three of the other suggested discussions on page 2.

ACTIVITY 3: MOVING FROM ASSERTION TO ARGUMENT

ADVICE ON THE USE OF THIS ACTIVITY

Activity 2 can be followed up by one which asks the learners to justify their RAG-rating decisions. This will help in understanding the difference between assertion and argument.

Assertion: a statement or an opinion which is not supported by a reason or further detail.

Argument: an assertion justified with a reason or further detail which explains or justifies something and counters other arguments.

In order to help move from assertion to argument, read the example question below and then add support to each of the assertions to turn it into an argument.

Was the First World War mainly responsible for the collapse of the Tsarist regime by 1917?

A1: The war played a vital role in polarising discontent against the Tsarist regime in Russia.

Provide support for this assertion

A2: Another issue to consider is the growing social and economic discontent in Russia in the decades from 1890.

Provide support for this assertion

A3: It can be argued that the real responsibility for the collapse of the Tsarist regime was to do with dissatisfaction with Tsar Nicholas II from his accession in 1894.

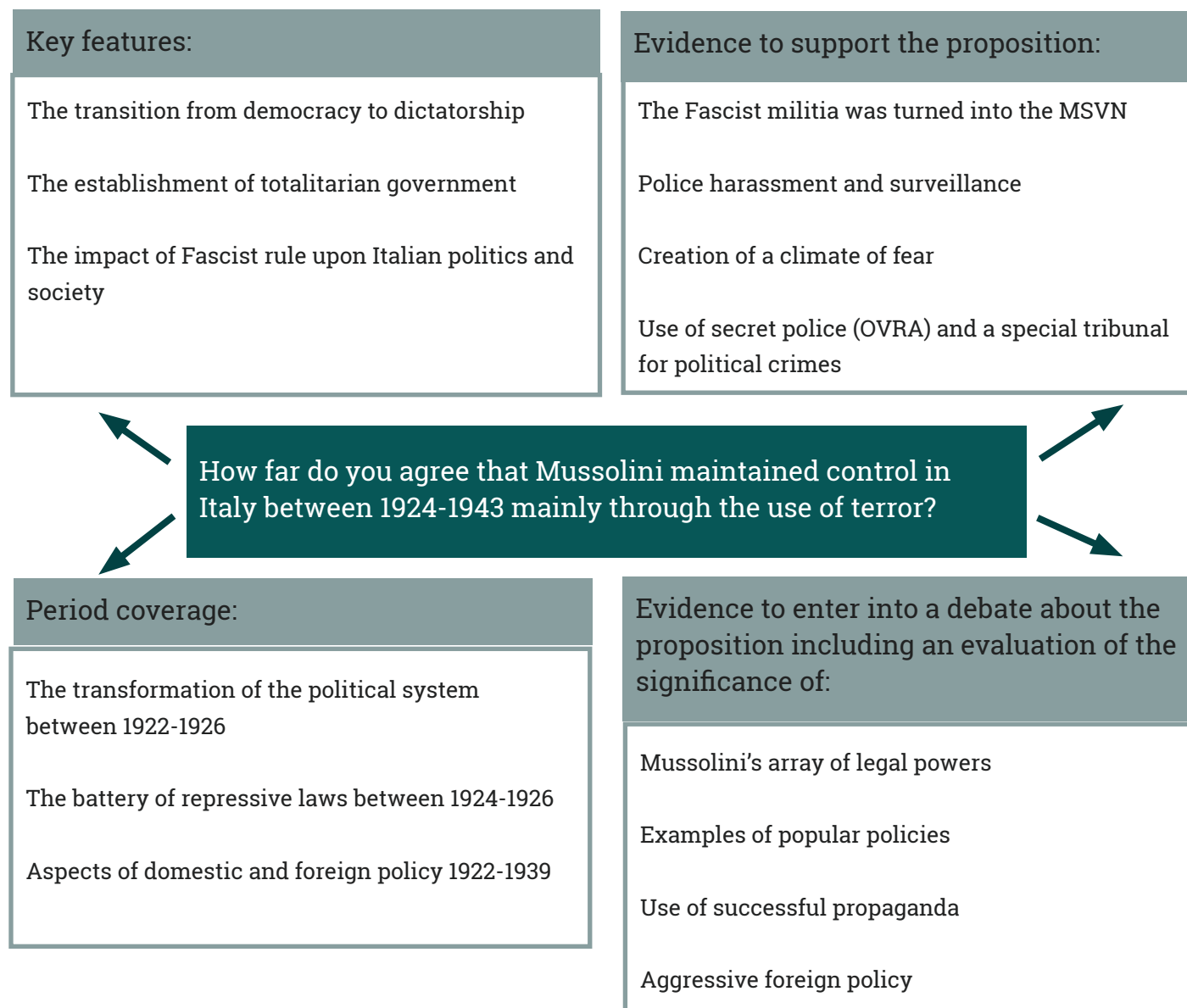
Provide support for this assertion

ACTIVITY 4: DEVELOPING A REASONED ARGUMENT

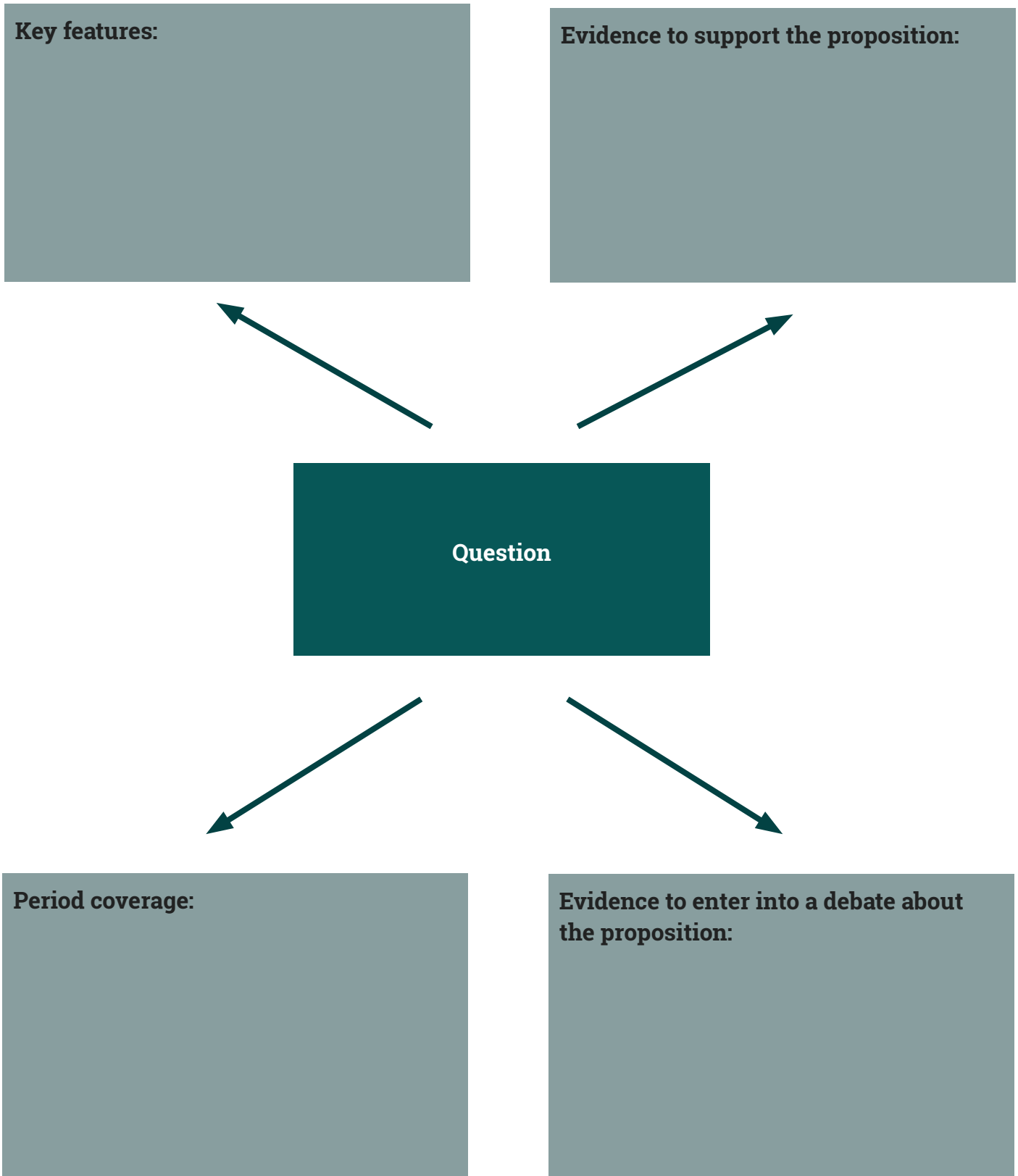
ADVICE ON THE USE OF THIS ACTIVITY

In considering the key historical concepts which underpin this option, it is expected that learners will demonstrate the ability to analyse the issues, evaluate their importance and be able to provide a substantiated judgement supported by appropriate information over the period set. This can often be done in conjunction with the suggested discussions approach as seen on page 2 of this document. Each of the examples of the suggested discussions identified can be used to address specific historical concepts and also to assist learners to develop a reasoned argument.

Here are some examples of how teachers and learners can approach the development of a reasoned argument in answer to a set question:



Using the example above, **complete the diagram that follows** for two more questions that have appeared on past examination papers for this option.



ACTIVITY 5: LINKING CONTENT WITH KEY CONCEPTS

ADVICE ON THE USE OF THIS ACTIVITY

Assessment Objective 1 outlines a number of concepts which underpin the study of History at AS and A Level. When responding to their assignments, learners often fail to focus on the key concepts in their responses, instead deploying information in a narrative or listing style.

It is important that learners understand that the content in Period Study 8 is linked with the key historical concepts which underpin AO1. These key concepts are shown below with examples of how the content of this option can be utilised to illustrate these particular concepts.

Look at the specification that you are studying for Period Study 8. **Identify two more features of the content of the specification that can illustrate each key concept.**

Remember that the specified content can be used to illustrate more than one concept if appropriate.

Key concepts	Examples of content to illustrate these concepts	
Cause and consequence	1	The main reasons for the establishment of Alliances and Ententes before 1914
	2	
	3	
Change and continuity	1	The changing fortunes of the Weimar Republic in the period 1918-1933
	2	
	3	
Similarity and difference	1	A comparison of the political leadership of Russia between 1905-1945
	2	
	3	
Significance and importance	1	The significance of economic co-operation in European relations in the period 1945-1991
	2	
	3	

ACTIVITY 6: SPOTTING HISTORICAL CONCEPTS

ADVICE ON THE USE OF THIS ACTIVITY

All the questions set for Unit 1 will expect you to engage with a debate over an historical concept. To do this effectively you should become skilled at spotting the concept and the evaluation that the question requires.

Can you identify the key concept from the sample questions below? This first one is completed and identified in **bold**.

- 'The collectivisation of agriculture had the **greatest impact** on the lives of the Russian people in the period 1924-1945.' Discuss.
- How far do you agree that the Cold War was mainly responsible for changing relations in Europe in the period 1945-1991?
- Was Germany mainly responsible for the increase in tensions in international relations in the period 1890-1939?
- How successful were attempts to reduce tensions in Europe in the period 1919-1938?
- To what extent were economic challenges the most serious problem facing Germany in the period 1918-1945?
- 'The lives of the people of Russia were affected more by repression than by any other government action in the period 1905-1945.' Discuss.

You can also use the WJEC Question Bank facility to practice spotting the key concepts in a range of other past questions. This is available at:

<http://www.wjec.co.uk/question-bank/index.html>

ACTIVITY 7: SETTING APPROPRIATE CONCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

ADVICE ON THE USE OF THIS ACTIVITY

In order to understand the broader nature of Unit 1 it is important that teachers and learners become familiar with how conceptual questions are formed, how they can be phrased and how they can be adapted according to what area of the Period Study is being taught. The following advice is offered:

- the question should be on a **mainstream issue** which is named or closely linked to the detail in the specification. Try not to set questions on minor or inconsequential areas of the specification
- there has to be **sufficient substance** to the main issue set that it promotes a lively debate of the topic studied. Do not set an issue that the learners can easily dismiss
- the question set should cover a **substantial period of time**
- the question should allow learners to **sustain an argument** throughout the answer
- the question should allow learners to show accurate **understanding of the relevant historical concept** in the question
- the question should include a **key word or words** which will allow learners to form a balanced judgement e.g. *'To what extent were economic challenges the **most** serious problem facing Germany in the period 1918-1945?' Discuss.*

A suggested way of approaching this aspect of learning is to use the following checklist when tasks and questions are set to learners.

Does the question set....	YES	NO
highlight a mainstream issue?		
allow a debate to be engaged with?		
cover a substantial period of time?		
focus on a key historical concept?		
include an evaluative word?		

Try and set your own conceptual questions on the content of Period Study 8. Can you set appropriate conceptual questions on the following content areas?

- The reasons for growing pressure for political / social and economic change in Europe 1945-1951
- Varying responses of German governments to opposition between 1918-1945
- A comparison of the significance of different international agreements in the period 1890-1939
- The impact of social and economic changes on Italy 1918-1945
- The importance of changing political leadership in Russia 1917-1945

Once you have done this, try and rag-rate the key features associated with your questions.

ACTIVITY 8: EVALUATING ESSAY STYLE WORK

Here are two examples of answers to Unit 1 questions set in the 2017 examinations.

- Can you apply the checklist on page 11 to these essays?
- Consider the strengths and limitations of each essay.
- Consider how each one could be improved and what advice you could give to the learner who wrote it.

Exemplar 1

To what extent were economic challenges the most serious problem facing Germany in the period 1918-1945?

The economic problems facing Germany could be considered the most serious problem facing Germany. In Germany there was a serious problem of hyper-inflation, this led to people's savings being de-valued overnight and pushed Germany into an economic depression. This was made worse as people's wages were not increasing meaning that thousands of Germans were poverty-stricken and homeless. However, it can be argued that this was a short term problem as Hindenburg introduced the Rentenmark which was a stable currency and helped solve hyper-inflation.

Hindenburg's solution showed that Germany's economic problems could be solved and showing that there were greater problems facing Germany in this period. One example is the threat from Communism with the country. The severity of this was amplified as a result of the Kapp Putsch which was a communist attempted takeover. Communism was a threat to Germany's power and ability to return to her pre-1914 status. Although the communist threat was usually disorganised and weak as shown by the failure of the Kapp Putsch and by the limited success of communist groups such as SOPADE.

On the other hand, the main reason for attempted uprisings in Germany like the Kapp Putsch was due to the poor economic status of Germany. Unemployment was a huge social and economic problem facing Germany throughout this period. Although Stresemann was able to significantly strengthen Germany's economic status, he never managed to reduce it below one million showing how it was always a problem. Germany's lack of economic output meant that they suffered and were unable to pay the reparations of the Treaty of Versailles. This led to the Rhineland being taken over by the French and a further economic challenge.

However the Treaty of Versailles was a great social problem that faced Germany in this period. The guilt clause meaning Germany had to take the blame of World War I damaged her reputation and the Treaty also significantly reduced Germany's ability to bounce back. As well as taking 10% of Germany's land and 15% of her population causing great social and political challenges in Germany, meaning the economic challenges were not the greatest challenge.

In contrast, Germany was unable to achieve economic autarky which was a great economic challenge causing serious problems to Germany across the nation. Hitler aimed to create a self-sufficient nation however, he was not successful. This left Germany heavily reliant on other countries for goods and, as her relations with other countries were weak it left Germany vulnerable and economically unstable. However some would say that the attempt to create autarky was successful especially during the wartime effort. Hitler was able to reduce unemployment to an all time low due to his largely successful schemes such as the work through joy and the KKK. These solved economic problems for Germany and although

she never reached an autarky state she became extremely prosperous and was one of the world's largest industrial powers under Hitler's rule and during the war. However Hitler achieved this using many illegal methods such as not counting Jews in the unemployment statistics, sending unmarried men under 25 to the workers' union and harsh treatment of workers to increase output for example working under fear of the SS.

An alternative challenge that could be considered the most serious problem facing Germany in the period of 1918-1945 was political instability. When the Weimar government was formed many people disapproved and this caused serious issues throughout Germany. This political instability was shown by the four attempts to overthrow the Weimar government. These displayed widespread disapproval and political instability in the nation as the Weimar government was seen as weak. Although the political instability was not present during the Nazi party reign as they eventually won a clear majority in the election and Hitler was extremely successful in silencing his political opponents presenting that political challenges were not a serious threat during the whole of this period. However Hitler created this political stability through fear and illegal methods like the Gestapo beating his opponents.

Overall the economic challenges were an extremely serious problem facing Germany. Hyper-inflation, unemployment and the Wall Street Crash caused severe problems in Germany as it was built on foreign investment meaning that they were always at risk of economic problems. However, there were many other problems facing Germany from 1918-1945 such as the political instability of the Weimar government. The threat from Communism was also a large problem as well as losing both world wars, this brought much instability to Germany and created many problems.

Exemplar 2

How far do you agree that the Cold War was mainly responsible for changing relations in Europe in the period 1945-1991?

The Cold War was a period of heated conflict largely between the USA and USSR that started after World War Two. It was responsible for many changing relations in Europe from 1945-1991. In many ways, Europe was a battleground for the USA and USSR to fight on metaphorically as no actual violence and war took place between the superpowers. The Cold War can be seen to be mainly responsible for changing relations in Europe because an east-west divide occurred or, as Winston Churchill put it, an 'iron curtain.'

The countries in East Europe were devastated after World War II and either they were too weak to prevent a covert takeover or they embraced it and welcomed communist regimes. The West suffered huge losses as well but remained capitalist as they always had been. Relations were affected by this because the West received funding from the USA after the Truman Doctrine and Marshal Plan in 1847, whereas the East was funded by COMECON. However the appeal of Communism is understandable given the situation after the war and it could be argued that it was merely a natural progression of economic strategies. This can be disputed though as Communists in countries like Romania joined a coalition and politically schemed and then revolted on their way to gaining control of their countries. To some extent this was not the Cold War but rather the incompetence of governments to ask for help when needed. Some countries refused Marshal Aid before being consumer by the USSR's communism. Even France and Sweden nearly became Communist after the Second World War. Despite this the Cold War caused a more significant divide than geographical boundaries suggest, for example, the Berlin Airlift from 1948-49 due to arguments over the division of Germany.

It was evident that the Cold War was mainly responsible for changing relations in Europe but there are other possible explanations such as the new friendships after World War II which is inked to growing tensions within 1960s Europe. In the 1960s the French President De Gaulle, set up an organisation called the EEC or European Economic Community. This established stronger relations within the West European countries because of economic agreements and trading links. However the UK was not involved at first. According to De Gaulle, the British had become too close to the Americans – he once called the UK 'the puppets of the Americans.' It is unclear whether this was a legitimate reason or whether it was jealousy. This created a new dynamic of relations within Europe. However, West Europe was already friendly with each other due to the Cold War. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) meant that if one country was attacked the others would help. A similar organisation known as the Warsaw Pact established in the 1950s was set up by the Soviet Union. The principle was the same. This created closer relations for countries within their respective groups but also created further divide between East and West. Regardless the EEC's exclusion of Britain did not help relations within the western bloc and it was only in the 1970s, after De Gaulle's resignation, that the UK was able to join the EEC.

Overall the EEC did cause a change in relations and this has some responsibility but the Cold War had a much larger influence. The Cold War is related to the leader of every country in Europe. For this argument the individual leaders of each country were responsible for changing relations. In the 1980s the USSR had a new leader – Gorbachev. He was concerned with spending on weapons due to the arms race and wanted to save money so more could be put into society. He wanted peace between countries and he was respected by the UK leader Thatcher. This resulted in an easing of tension between East and West. However, Gorbachev was overthrown and the USSR collapsed with him, meaning the Cold War caused more tension in its aftermath. Whilst Gorbachev improved relations with the west, the Cold War worsened them. The collapse of the USSR may have resulted in the end of the Cold War but there was new conflict created out of its ashes. Relations worsened in some parts of Eastern Europe such as Yugoslavia where ethnic cleansing began. This is related to the collapse of the USSR as they could no longer keep order.

In conclusion the Cold War was mainly responsible for changing relations in Europe because it created the East-West divide that plague Europe throughout this period. The EEC had some responsibility for changing relations as did individual leaders such as De Gaulle and Gorbachev, but both pale in comparison to the dynamic force caused by the USA and USSR's Cold War.