Your guide to answering exam questions for GCSE History Option A: Medicine and Health Through Time/Germany Depth Study

Answering non-source based questions

These types of question will appear on **Paper 1** only.

Answering 'briefly describe' questions

EITHER identify 3 relevant points OR describe/explain two relevant points.

Answering 'explain' questions

EITHER explain three reasons OR explain two reasons in depth. If you are unsure how much depth you should go into it is best to explain three reasons instead.

Answering 'how far' questions

Step 1: Explain at least two reasons for one side of the argument.

Step 2: Explain at least two reasons for the other side of the argument.

Step 3: Add a conclusion that comes to an overall judgement about 'how far' and support it with evidence.

Answering 'Who/which factor is more important' questions

Step 1: Explain why one person/factor is important.

Step 2: Explain why the other person/factor is important.

Step 3: Explain why one person/factor is more important than the other person/factor.

Answering source-based questions

These types of question can appear on **both** Paper 1 **and** Paper 2. It is highly likely that you will encounter at least one type of source question that is not covered in this booklet. If this happens, remember that you must **not** take any source at face value. You must look for deeper meaning in the source, particularly considering its **purpose**. You must also use a wide range of **contextual knowledge** to support your evaluation of a source.

Answering 'How far does this source explain X' questions

Step 1: Explain contextual knowledge that supports the source.

Step 2: Evaluate the reliability and/or utility of the source using contextual knowledge.

Step 3: Use contextual knowledge to explain other reasons for X.

Answering 'Why was this source published in (year)' questions

Step 1: Explain the message of the source.

Step 2: Use contextual knowledge to support the source (what was happening at the time the source was published?).

Step 3: Use contextual knowledge to explain the purpose of the source and why it was published in that particular year.

Answering 'Does this source prove X' questions

Step 1: Use the content of the source to explain its limitations.

Step 2: Evaluate the source as proof using the purpose of the source.

Step 3: Evaluate the source as proof using contextual knowledge and/or cross-reference to other sources.

Answering 'How typical of the time were the X described in this source' questions

Step 1: Use detailed contextual knowledge to describe how typical X was.

Step 2: Use contextual knowledge to explain why a historian might be surprised by the source.

Step 3: Use contextual knowledge to explain why a historian might not be surprised by the source.

Answering 'What can you learn from this source about X' questions

Step 1: Make valid inferences (suggestions about what you can work out) using details from the source. DO NOT just copy or paraphrase the source.

Step 2: Use contextual knowledge and or/cross-reference to other sources to support your answer.

Answering 'How useful is this source as evidence about X' questions

Step 1: Explain why the source IS useful as evidence about X, using contextual knowledge and cross-reference to other sources, if possible.

Step 2: Explain why the source IS NOT useful as evidence about X, using contextual knowledge and cross-reference to other sources, if possible.

Step 3: Explain why the source IS/IS NOT useful using the purpose of the source.

Answering 'Which of these two sources is more useful as evidence about X' questions

Step 1: Explain why the first source IS useful, using contextual knowledge and purpose.

Step 2: Explain why the first source IS NOT useful, using contextual knowledge and purpose.

Step 3: Explain why the second source IS useful, using contextual knowledge and purpose.

Step 4: Explain why the second source IS NOT useful, using contextual knowledge and purpose.

Step 5: Form an overall conclusion about which source is more useful, with reasons.

Answering 'How similar are these two sources' questions

Step 1: Explain why the sources are similar, using the content of the sources.

Step 2: Explain why the sources are different, using the content of the the sources.

Step 3: Compare and contrast the purpose of the two sources.

Answering 'How far does this source show X' questions

Step 1: Use contextual knowledge to support X.

Step 2: Use contextual knowledge to oppose X.

Answering 'Study all the sources, how far...' questions

Top tip: These questions are worth 16 marks (19 marks including spelling, punctuation and grammar) and one will **definitely** be the final question on **Paper 2**. OCR recommends that you spend **30 minutes** answering this question. The key to achieving full marks on this question is to use a wide range of **contextual knowledge**. You must use the sources to **support** your contextual knowledge, but they should **not** be the main focus of your answer.

Step 1: Use contextual knowledge to explain why the statement is correct.

Step 2: Use the sources to support your contextual knowledge.

Step 3: Use contextual knowledge to explain why the statement is incorrect.

Step 4: Use the source to support your contextual knowledge.

Step 5: Add a conclusion that comes to an overall judgement about 'how far' and support it with evidence.