

<p>OCR – AS GCE European and World History Period Studies F 962</p>	<p>Unit 1 Democracy and Dictatorship: Italy, 1896– 1943</p>	<p>ESSAY</p>
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<p>Examiner’s Specific Advice</p> <p>‘How successful?’ clearly indicates there must be debate over success and the essay must assess the degree and nature of success/failure. It must also consider the criteria by which success can be judged, looking both at Mussolini’s own declared aims and at what, with hindsight, was for the good of Italy during the period. ‘Economic policies’ restricts treatment to policies relating to the economy more or less directly – you should not include, therefore, reference to religious, political or social policies except insofar as they have an economic content.</p>	
<p>Exemplar Question</p> <p>How successful were Mussolini’s economic policies?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[50 marks]</p>	<p>Click Here for a Chronology Relating to this Topic</p>
<p>Examiner’s Exemplar Plan and Essay 1</p> <p>Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Agriculture • Industry • Finance and Trade • Conclusion (1) <p>Mussolini had a number of economic policies including various ‘battles’. Some were more successful than others but overall Mussolini’s record in this area was not that good. Some of his better policies were in agriculture (2).</p> <p>In agriculture Mussolini began the ‘battle for grain’. <u>He wanted to increase wheat production in Italy</u> (3). The ‘battle’ began in 1925 and by the mid-1930s grain production in Italy had increased by around 25%. This ‘battle’ then was a success. <u>On the other hand much of the</u></p>	<p>(1) A very basic plan, which serves only as a reminder of the general areas to be covered, with no overt thinking on ‘success’.</p> <p>(2) This is a relevant, if very general, start. You focus on the question and give a brief reference to an aspect of economic policies – the ‘battles’ and a general line of argument. There is also, in the final sentence, a link to the first paragraph. However, you have not</p>

<p><u>land used for grain production was unsuitable – it would have been better to grow olive trees or orchards</u> (4).</p> <p>Mussolini also had success in reclaiming land for agricultural production. The best example was the draining of the Pontine marshes and their conversion to farmland. <u>Such schemes were also good propaganda for Mussolini's government</u> (5).</p> <p>In industry Mussolini set up the Ministry of Corporations in 1926. This ministry was responsible for the 'Corporative State' whereby representatives of workers and employers sat on the same corporation for their industry under fascist chairmanship. The aim was to resolve all disputes between workers and bosses. It was not good for workers as the fascists on the corporations sided with the bosses. It was good for employers in that strikes and unions were no longer a problem and in hard times they were able to impose longer hours and lower wages (6).</p> <p>Mussolini wanted Italy to be strong and prepared for war. In industry, therefore, he encouraged steel, chemicals and rubber. The government allowed firms like Fiat and Pirelli to dominate the car and rubber industries and the government gave them large contracts (7). Mussolini also wanted Italy to be self-sufficient and to reduce imports. The big problem was that Italy had few of the raw materials necessary for heavy industry.</p> <p>Mussolini believed a strong country should have a strong currency. In 1927, therefore, he fixed the value of the lire at 90 to the pound – it had been around 150. It was a popular move, but it harmed the economy as Italian exports were now very expensive and cheap imports also damaged Italian producers. To help, Mussolini placed tariffs on imports (8).</p> <p><u>Mussolini was not an economist but was concerned that Italy became a strong and respected country. He also wanted to change the Italians into a dynamic and proud nation. His economic policies were designed to help those aims</u> (9). He had some propaganda successes in his battles and protected some industries, but he also did some damage.</p>	<p>indicated the criteria by which success will be assessed nor have you indicated the range of economic policy.</p> <p>(3) A missed opportunity here to clarify Mussolini's aims – one way of testing his 'success'. Why did Mussolini want to increase grain production?</p> <p>(4) Good. There is an attempt at balance here, to suggest limits to success.</p> <p>(5) This point could be expanded. Was one of Mussolini's aims in economic policy simply to produce good reviews for the government? Was the propaganda aspect more important than any economic benefit?</p> <p>(6) Corporativism is difficult to deal with and here you have managed to outline some of its main features. There is some assessment of its success, which is balanced. The corporatist state covered all areas of work – not just industry.</p> <p>(7) This paragraph starts by saying something about Mussolini's aims, but then drifts into description. There is no explicit assessment of success in this area.</p>
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Examiner's Assessment

This essay is mostly accurate, relevant, well organised and clearly communicated. It is worthy of Level II and 16 marks (AO1a).

The essay considers a number of areas of economic policy, and is well argued in parts. The analysis and assessment of

success, however, is patchy, general and of variable quality. Points are often developed only in a limited way and there is some generalisation. There is some description. Understanding is generally sound and a range of issues is considered, if not in depth. Apart from the conclusion, there is no attempt to set Mussolini's economic policies in context or to draw out broad themes. Crucially, there is no attempt to identify explicit criteria for assessing success – against, for example, Mussolini's own aims and the economic context. Nor is there enough assessment of the impact they had on the overall economy and, for example, living standards. This element of the answer has been placed at the bottom of Level III and given 16 marks (AO1b). Overall, the essay has scored 32 marks out of 50, and is of a Grade C standard.

(8) This paragraph makes a reasonable point about the impact of fixing the exchange rate. There is some assessment. This could be made more effective by indicating some of the industries particularly affected – like textiles – which relied on exports and went into decline.

(9) A pity the essay did not have these three overview sentences at the start. Here you place economic policy in a wider context, which could have provided a useful test for success.

Examiner's Exemplar Plan and Essay 2

Plan

- Criteria for success: Mussolini's aims, context of policies (1920s economic climate/depression, etc.), impact of policies (on economy/people)
- Initial policies – de Stefani - capitalism
- The Corporate State – nature, aim and impact
- Agriculture – battles for land and grain
- Currency and Trade – lire, imports and exports
- Industry
- Depression and war

(10)

Mussolini was not an economist and had little interest in, or understanding of, economics. His priorities lay elsewhere – in securing himself in power and in transforming Italy into a strong military power with an empire (11). His economic policies were therefore developed with these two aims in mind. One test of success, therefore, must be how far his policies helped secure those wider aims. Another test would be to assess the impact of his economic policies on the Italian economy (did they help it grow? Did they distort the economy?) and people (did the Italians see a rise in living standards, for example?). Finally, how well did Mussolini's policies help Italy cope with the economic pressures created

(10) The essay plan here indicates a number of directly relevant areas, and you have indicated the criteria by which success can be assessed, which is good.

(11) This is an effective opening, indicating a broad understanding of the context we need to view Mussolini's economic policy.

(12) The opening paragraph must be focused on the question. Here you give a clear indication of

by the Depression? (12)

After 1922 Mussolini's main aim was to secure himself in power. This is reflected in his initial approach to the economy – he needed to secure the support of industrialists and the appointment of the respected de Stefani as Treasury minister, helped this. He pursued industry friendly policies such as limiting government expenditure to reduce inflation. Socialist trade unions and strikes were also outlawed under the Vidoni Pact (1925). He was also helped in these early years by an upturn in the general economic climate, which saw an increase in Italian exports. All in all, then, industrialists were generally happy to support Mussolini and this contributed to his successful moves towards dictatorship (13).

Once relatively secure in power, however, il Duce was less willing to bow to industry's wishes and the succeeding years saw a growth of state intervention in economic affairs. In 1926 Mussolini established the Ministry of Corporations and organised the economy into a series of corporations to represent the workers, employers and fascists in each branch of the economy. A National Council of Corporations (1930) was set up to plan, regulate and control production whilst individual corporations dealt with disputes over wages, hours and working conditions. Arguably the benefits of these arrangements included the avoidance of damaging industrial disputes and close state control helped limit the effects of the depression (Mussolini ordered wage cuts). Industrialists were also more or less happy with the system as the fascists tended to favour them in disputes. However, such favour was often accompanied by corruption (industrialists had to 'buy' what they wanted). The system was also inefficient, with a large bureaucracy, and was open to abuse – for example, mock factories were built to secure state subsidies (14).

In agriculture, there was little overarching policy and little was done to effectively address the long-existing problems of rural poverty, especially in the south. However, it is in agriculture that Mussolini appeared to achieve some obvious success associated with his 'battles' for 'land' and 'grain'. As the slogans indicated, however, the aim of the policies was, at least in part, propaganda for the fascist regime. They were also, especially the latter, part of a policy aimed at making Italy strong and less dependent on imports of essential goods. Despite its prominence the 'battle for land' had little real impact on the economy as a whole – although the draining of the Pontine Marshes did provide extra farmland parcelled out to ex-servicemen. More significant was the 'battle for grain' that aimed to increase the amount of wheat Italy produced. Certainly much was achieved – wheat production increased by about

your test of success. However, there is no clear indication of your line of argument.

(13) A good paragraph, which highlights your view of the subordination of economic policy to more general aims. There is sound knowledge, understanding and assessment of success in here.

(14) The Corporative State is difficult to understand and write about. Here you have made an excellent attempt without overuse of description. Accurate knowledge is displayed and an assessment of benefits and disadvantages offered. This 'Yes there were advantages/ successes ... but there were also disadvantages ...' approach is a useful one to remember. A concluding 'So, overall ...' sentence might have drawn the points neatly together. Remember Yes ... but ... so! – it can be applied to individual paragraphs and to whole essays.

(15) Another very effective paragraph, which sets the 'battles' in a wider context whilst also providing an assessment of their specific impact – backed up by examples.

a quarter between the mid-1920s and mid-1930s – principally by bringing new land under cultivation. However, much of this increase in production was bought at the expense of land that would have been better used for olive or fruit production (15).

In 1927 Mussolini launched another battle – the battle for the Lire. He fixed the exchange rate at 90 to the pound (it had been 150). This increased Mussolini's prestige. It made Italian exports expensive and imports cheaper (16).

In industry, Mussolini favoured businesses related to or necessary for war. They were protected from foreign imports by high tariffs and were given lucrative government contracts. Firms like Fiat (motor industry) and Pirelli (rubber) did very well (17).

Perhaps one area of economic policy where Mussolini's approach was successful was in the handling of the effects of the depression. As elsewhere, the depression led to the closure of many businesses and to a consequent rise in unemployment. However, Mussolini's government led the way in using the state to help – sanctioning a public works building programme (including motorways and hydro-electric power stations) which put the unemployed back to work. It also helped the banks. In 1933 the Institute for the Reconstruction of Industry was established, which took over responsibility for providing loans to industries and promoted new techniques. Whilst this was expensive it did enable Italy to get through the depression a little better than many of her neighbours (18).

Overall, Mussolini's economic policies did achieve some modest successes, although the picture is a patchy one. This perhaps reflects the fact that economics was not Mussolini's priority. He hoped to make Italy more self-sufficient, but could do little effective given Italy's lack of essential raw materials. He hoped to prepare Italy for war and certainly protected industries necessary for war, but when war came, Italy was unprepared. Mussolini sought to delay Italy's entry into the war pleading Italy's lack of necessary resources and materials. Mussolini certainly did little to solve the long-term economic problems facing Italy, such as rural poverty and the north-south divide (19).

Examiner's Assessment

A well organised and clearly written essay that contains some high-quality paragraphs and relevant, detailed factual material. It also has some weaker sections, e.g. on currency and industry. These features merit a Level IB

(16) This is a less effective paragraph and lacks the analytical thrust and developed explanation of the previous two. There is no explicit judgement or assessment of 'success' here, and no indication of what Mussolini was trying to do by fixing the exchange rate.

(17) Again, not a very effective paragraph – there is potentially a very good point about Mussolini's priorities, but this is only slightly developed and the assessment lacks balance.

(18) Your essay recovers here. From the start of the paragraph the question is directly addressed and there is sufficient explanation and supporting evidence provided to be convincing.

(19) A thoughtful conclusion, which brings together some of the themes explored in the essay and relates back to some of the overall points made in the introduction.

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<p>mark of 20 out of 24 (AO1a). The answer is mostly consistently and relevantly analytical, with developed and substantiated explanations. The relative importance of different factors is considered but the question raised in the introduction about living standards is not directly addressed (apart from some implicit points related to unemployment and rural poverty). This element of the essay deserves a Level IB mark of 23 out of 26 (AO1b). Overall, a mark of 43 has been given, equivalent to a low Grade A.</p>	
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Click here for a Mark Scheme that accompanies the exemplar answers provided above

Click here for further sample Questions to test your skills

Mark Scheme

Examiners use Mark Schemes to determine how best to categorise a candidate's essay and to ensure that the performances of thousands of candidates are marked to a high degree of consistency. Few essays fall neatly into the mark levels indicated below: some answers will be particularly well argued but offer little supporting detail; others may be factually full but poorly organised or contain few judgements. Examiners therefore seek to find the 'best fit' when applying the scheme. Each essay has a final mark based on two Assessment Objectives (AO1a and AO1b) worth 24 + 26 = 50 marks. As the standard of the two essays lies between Level 1 and Level IV, only the descriptors and marks for these levels are tabulated below.

AO1a Mark Scheme for Levels I, II, III and IV	
Assessment Objectives	Recall, select and use historical knowledge appropriately, and communicate knowledge and understanding clearly and effectively
Level IA 21–24 marks	Uses a wide range of accurate, detailed and relevant evidence. Accurate and confident use of appropriate historical terminology. Answer is clearly structured and coherent; communicates accurately and legibly.
Level IB 18–20 marks	Uses accurate, detailed and relevant evidence. Accurate use of a range of appropriate historical terminology. Answer is clearly structured and mostly coherent; writes accurately and legibly.
Level II 16–17 marks	Uses mostly accurate, detailed and relevant evidence, which demonstrates a competent command of the topic. Generally accurate use of historical terminology. Answer is structured and mostly coherent; writing is legible and communication is generally clear.
Level III 14–15 marks	Uses accurate and relevant evidence, which demonstrates some command of the topic but there may be some inaccuracy. Answer includes relevant historical terminology but this may not be extensive or always accurately used. Most of the answer is organised and structured; the answer is mostly legible and clearly communicated.
Level IV 12–13 marks	There is deployment of relevant knowledge but level/accuracy of detail will vary; there may be some evidence that is tangential or irrelevant. Some unclear and/or under-developed and/or disorganised sections; mostly satisfactory level of communication.

AO1b Mark Scheme for Levels I, II, III and IV	
Assessment Objectives	Demonstrate an understanding of the past through explanation and analysis, arriving at substantiated judgements of key concepts and of the relationships between key features of the period studied
Level IA 24–26 marks	<p>Clear and accurate understanding of key concepts relevant to analysis and to the topic.</p> <p>Clear and accurate understanding of issues in their historical context. Answer is consistently and relevantly analytical with developed and substantiated explanations, some of which may be unexpected. The argument evaluates a range of relevant factors and reaches clearly substantiated judgements about relative importance and/or links.</p>
Level IB 22–23 marks	<p>Clear and accurate understanding of most key concepts relevant to analysis and to the topic.</p> <p>Answer is mostly consistently and relevantly analytical with mostly developed and substantiated explanations.</p> <p>Clear understanding of the significance of issues in their historical context. Substantiated judgements about relative importance of and/or links between factors will be made but quality of explanation in support may not be consistently high.</p>
Level II 19–21 marks	<p>Mostly clear and accurate understanding of many key concepts relevant to analysis and to the topic.</p> <p>Clear understanding of the significance of most relevant issues in their historical context.</p> <p>Much of the answer is relevantly analytical and substantiated with detailed evidence but there may be some description.</p> <p>The analysis of factors and/or issues provides some judgements about relative importance and/or linkages.</p>
Level III 16–18 marks	<p>Some uneven understanding of key concepts relevant to analysis and of concepts relevant to their historical context.</p> <p>Answers may be a mixture of analysis and explanation but also simple description of relevant material and narrative of relevant events OR answers may provide more consistent analysis but the quality will be uneven and its support often general or thin.</p> <p>Answer considers a number of factors but with very little evaluation of importance or linkages between factors/issues.</p> <p>Points made about importance or about developments in the context of the period will often be little more than assertions and descriptions.</p>
Level IV 13–15 marks	<p>Understanding of key concepts relevant to analysis and the topic is variable but in general is satisfactory.</p> <p>Limited and patchy understanding of a few relevant issues in their historical context.</p> <p>Answer may be largely descriptive/narratives of events and links between this and analytical comments will typically be weak or unexplained OR answers will mix passages of descriptive material with occasional explained analysis.</p> <p>Limited points made about importance/links or about developments in the context of the period will be little more than assertions and descriptions.</p>

Further sample questions

- (1) To what extent was fear of communism the **main** reason for Mussolini's rise to power?
- (2) Assess the reasons why Mussolini was able to consolidate his power in the years after 1922.
- (3) How successful was Mussolini's foreign policy in this period?
- (4) To what extent was propaganda the **main** reason why Mussolini was able to stay in power?
- (5) How far did Mussolini achieve his aims in domestic policy?
- (6) How far did Mussolini succeed in achieving his political aims in Italy during the period 1922–40?

Chronology: Key Events in *Italy, 1919–40*

- 1919 Mussolini founds the Fascist movement.
- 1921 Fascists win 35 seats in Parliament.
- 1922 March on Rome. Mussolini appointed Prime Minister; de Stefani becomes his Treasury Minister.
- 1922– Mussolini's government benefits from the general economic upturn (1).
- 1923 Battle for land launched.
- 1925 Vidoni Pact (2). Start of the 'Battle for Grain'.
- 1926 Ministry of Corporations established, with Mussolini as Minister.
- 1927 The value of the Lire fixed at 90 to the pound. 'Battle for Births' launched (3).
- 1930 National Council of Corporations set up (4). Mussolini orders wage cuts (5).
- 1933 Institute for the Reconstruction of Industry set up.
- 1935 Italian invasion of Abyssinia (6).
- 1936 Italian involvement in Spanish Civil War.
- 1939 Mussolini tells Hitler Italy not ready for war. Balance of payments deficit of over 28 billion lire.
- 1940 Italy enters war.

- (1) In the period 1922 to 1925, when Mussolini was consolidating his power, exports doubled.
- (2) The Vidoni Pact abolished free trade unions and a little later strikes were prohibited.

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- (3) The 'Battle for Births' is perhaps not strictly an economic policy. However, Mussolini believed a populous country was a powerful one and aimed to increase the Italian population from 37 million to 60 million. As part of the policy, bachelors were heavily taxed and prizes and other benefits were introduced for prolific mothers. Whilst there was some success, there was no radical change in the birth rate and in 1940 the population had only reached just under 44 million.
- (4) With representatives of the workers, employers and fascists, this body was to plan, regulate and control economic production. In 1933 Mussolini announced his intention that the Council would replace the Assembly and make laws – this happened in 1939 when the legislative assembly (parliament) was replaced by the Chamber of Fasces and Corporations. In practice, it was meaningless and acted as a rubber stamp for the dictatorship.
- (5) Mussolini ordered wage cuts in 1927, 1930 and 1934 in order to help the economy. He had no economic aim to improve living standards.
- (6) Foreign policy adventures had a great impact on the economy and helped shape its direction. From the mid-1930s there was greater emphasis on war-related production and on developing Italy as, as far as possible, a self-sufficient state – a policy known as Autarky. The expense of war crippled the Italian state and helps explain the enormous balance of payments deficit.

Teaching Activities

Try the following with your students:

- (1) Using the two exemplar essays, discuss the importance and purpose of essay planning in successfully answering an AS essay question. What makes a good plan?
- (2) Compare the introductions and/or conclusions of the two exemplar essays. Which is the more effective and why?
- (3) Both essays refer to a number of areas of economic policy. What is meant by 'economic policy'? Which areas would you include and which would you exclude? Should an essay on economic policy include the 'battle for births', for example?
- (4) Lead a discussion about the criteria by which success can be measured. You could take the introduction to the second essay as a starting point. Then ask your students to gather information and points relevant to each of the criteria you have identified. What 'pattern of success' emerges? Can this be transferred into a clear line of argument? For example, could it be argued that, whilst Mussolini's economic policies cannot be deemed a success for the Italian people, specific industries did benefit and, as far as Mussolini was concerned, his policies helped consolidate his position and power?
- (5) The comments on the first exemplar essay referred to the 'Yes ... but ... so' approach to a 'How successful?' type essay. Divide your students into groups and get them to research different areas of economic policy – agriculture, industry, currency, trade, corporate state, etc. and produce evidence/points in three columns headed 'Yes', 'But' and 'So' (the third column would contain their conclusions on their research area).

Resources

- M. Blinkhorn, *Mussolini and Fascist Italy* (Methuen, Lancaster Pamphlets, 1984)
M. Clark, *Modern Italy 1871–1982* (Longman, 1984)
A. De Grand, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Routledge, 1995)
D. Mack Smith, *Mussolini* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1981)
P. Morgan, *Italian Fascism 1919–45* (Macmillan, 1995)
M. Robson, *Italy: The Rise of Fascism 1915–45* (Hodder Murray, 2006)
E. R. Tannenbaum, *Fascism in Italy – Society and Culture 1922–45* (Allen Lane, 1972)

Weblinks

www.schoolhistory.co.uk

www.thehistorychannel.co.uk/classroom/alevel/catholic.htm

www.schoolshistory.org.uk

www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk

www.historytoday.com

www.britannica.com

www.udel.edu/POSCISR/mwh/333/disc10/Musso.htm