

ACS INDEPENDENT 2026 Y4 HISTORY P1 PRELIM

Suggested Answers

a)	Study Sources A and B. How far does Source A agree with Source B? Explain your answer.	6m
L1	Mismatch	1m
L2	No BOC, Valid comparison but with no evidence/Difference in provenance only/weak purpose.	2m
L3	Similarity and/or difference in content explained. (Award 3m max if only evidence provided but no explanation, 4m for 1 analysis and 5m for both Sim and Diff) <u>Both sources agree that the Reichstag Fire was exploited by Hitler to establish a dictatorship.</u> - Source A shows Hindenburg telling Hitler, "This is a heaven-sent opportunity... If you can't be a dictator now you never will." This suggests that the fire provided Hitler with the perfect excuse to seize dictatorial powers. The scroll labelled "Emergency Powers" further shows that Hitler used emergency legislation following the fire to strengthen his control. - Source B similarly states that the Reichstag Fire became "the excuse for the persecution of Communist and Social Democratic workers" and explains that the "Decree on the Protection of People and State" was used to "cancel the essential basic rights incorporated in the constitution of the Weimar Republic." This likewise suggests that Hitler exploited the fire to remove democratic freedoms and establish authoritarian rule. - Therefore, both sources agree that the Reichstag Fire was not merely a fire itself but became the justification for Hitler's rapid consolidation of power. <u>The sources disagree over the extent of Hitler's actions following the Reichstag Fire.</u> - Source A focuses mainly on Hitler's acquisition of dictatorial power. Hindenburg tells Hitler, "This is a heaven-sent opportunity... If you can't be a dictator now you never will," while the scroll labelled "Emergency Powers" suggests that the Reichstag Fire gave Hitler the legal opportunity to concentrate power in his own hands. The cartoon therefore emphasises Hitler's political ambition and the establishment of dictatorship. - Source B, however, goes much further by arguing that the Reichstag Fire was used not only to establish dictatorship but also to launch widespread persecution of the political left. It states that the fire became "the excuse for the persecution of Communist and Social Democratic workers," that "thousands of people" were arrested, and that left-wing newspapers were confiscated and banned. This shows that Hitler used the fire to eliminate organised opposition, particularly Communists and Social Democrats. - Therefore, while Source A concentrates on Hitler using the Reichstag Fire to become a dictator, Source B emphasises the systematic repression of left-wing political opponents as the key consequence of the fire.	3-5m

L4	Explain difference in purpose. (Award 5m only if impact/evidence lacking in purpose explanation). The sources differ in their purposes. Source A was published in a British newspaper on 8 March 1933, only days after the Reichstag Fire when Hitler had just begun using emergency powers to restrict civil liberties. Its purpose is to warn the British public about the danger of Hitler exploiting the communist threat to establish a dictatorship. This is conveyed through Hindenburg's remark, "This is a heaven-sent opportunity, my lad. If you can't be a dictator now you never will," while the scroll labelled "Emergency Powers" symbolises the legal powers Hitler was acquiring after the fire. By portraying Hindenburg as encouraging Hitler to seize this opportunity, the cartoon suggests that the Reichstag Fire was being used as a convenient pretext rather than a genuine national emergency. The intended impact was to alert British readers to the erosion of democracy in Germany and to encourage them to view Hitler's growing power with suspicion and concern. In contrast, Source B was published in 2001 by an online organisation that promotes world socialism, so it presents events from a Marxist perspective. Its purpose is to criticise the Nazi regime and show that it deliberately used the Reichstag Fire to destroy the political left. This is supported by the source's claim that the fire became the "excuse for the persecution of Communist and Social Democratic workers," that "thousands" were arrested, and that emergency decrees cancelled the "essential basic rights" of the Weimar Constitution. By highlighting Nazi repression of Communists and other left-wing groups, the source aims to convince readers that the Nazis used the Reichstag Fire to eliminate socialist opposition and strengthen their dictatorship.	5-6m
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b)	Study Source C. Are you surprised by this source? Explain your answer. (5m)	
L1	Identifies content which surprise/does not surprise but no reason given/ unsupported explanation/ Provenance only explained.	1
L2	Surprise/lack of surprise based on ‘common sense’/ undeveloped purpose analysis I am surprised by the purpose of Source C because, although Hitler had already become increasingly authoritarian by 1934, the author still praised him as "the saviour from economic and social disaster." It is surprising that the source presents Hitler so positively despite his growing dictatorship.	2
L3	Surprise/ lack of surprise supported with source evidence only. I am not surprised by the content of Source C because it reflects why many (conservative) Germans initially supported Hitler. The source describes Hitler as "the saviour from economic and social disaster," "the unifier of the German people," and the man "restoring its honour abroad."	3
L4	Surprise/lack of surprise supported with source evidence and cross-referencing to CK or other sources OR purpose only explained. NOT SURPRISED: I am not surprised by the content of Source C because it reflects why many (conservative) Germans initially supported Hitler. The source describes Hitler as "the saviour from economic and social disaster," "the unifier of the German people," and the man "restoring its honour abroad." This is consistent with contextual knowledge. When Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933, Germany was still suffering from the effects of the Great Depression, with around six million unemployed. Hitler's government introduced public works programmes such as the Autobahn, reduced unemployment through rearmament and labour schemes, restored political stability after years of weak coalition governments, and rejected the humiliating restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles. These early achievements convinced many Germans, especially conservatives and nationalists, that Hitler had rescued Germany. Therefore, it is not surprising that the author viewed Hitler as Germany's "saviour." Additional point: Furthermore, the source states that this positive impression lasted "to the first large scale violation of all law, the Rohm purge," showing that the author's support declined after the Night of the Long Knives in June 1934, when Hitler ordered the murder of Ernst Röhm and many perceived enemies without trial. This also agrees with contextual knowledge, as the purge exposed Hitler's willingness to use violence outside the law. OR SURPRISED: I am surprised by the extent to which the author praises Hitler, calling him "the saviour from economic and social disaster," "the unifier of the German people," and the man who restored Germany's honour. While contextual knowledge shows that Hitler did reduce unemployment and increased his popularity through economic recovery and nationalist policies, there was already evidence by early 1933–1934	3-4

	that he was suppressing democracy. <u>The Reichstag Fire Decree and the Enabling Act had removed civil liberties and parliamentary checks, while political opponents, especially Communists and Social Democrats, had been arrested or imprisoned. Therefore, it is surprising that the author portrays Hitler in such overwhelmingly positive terms despite these authoritarian measures already being in place.</u>	
L5	Explains surprise/ not surprise through purpose analysis/critical analysis of provenance respectively. Supported with source evidence and CK/CR. (Award 4m only if explanation lack evidence). I am not surprised by the purpose of Source C because, as a Prussian nobleman writing in 1934, the author belonged to a conservative elite that initially welcomed Hitler for restoring stability and national pride. Therefore, it is expected that his purpose was to explain and justify this early support by describing Hitler as "the saviour from economic and social disaster" and "the unifier of the German people." Through this message, the author suggests that Hitler genuinely appeared to have rescued Germany from its political, economic and diplomatic crises during his early months in power. The intended impact was to help readers understand why many respectable conservatives initially supported Hitler before later becoming disillusioned after the Röhm Purge, showing that their early support seemed reasonable at the time.	4-5

c)	Study Source D. What can you infer from this source about Hitler's rise to power in 1933? Explain your answer.	5m
L1	Misunderstands/paraphrase with no inference/describes source.	1m
L2	Inference unsupported.	2m
L3	Inference/s supported and explained. Award 3m for 1 inference and 4m for 2 inferences. Inference 1: Hitler's rise to power depended heavily on the support of Hindenburg and von Papen. The cartoon shows Hitler sitting on the shoulders of Hindenburg and von Papen, suggesting that they are physically carrying him into power. The title "The Temporary Triangle" implies that their alliance was responsible for Hitler's appointment as Chancellor. Inference 2: Hindenburg and von Papen underestimated Hitler and mistakenly believed they could control him. The caption states, "For he's a jolly good fellow... (Aside: 'Confound him!') And so say both of us!" This suggests that although Hindenburg and von Papen publicly supported Hitler, they privately found him troublesome and believed they could manage him. The word "Temporary" also implies that they expected their alliance with Hitler to be short-lived.	3-4m
L4	Inference supported and explained with <u>source evidence and in context</u>. Award 5m for a well-explained answer. Inference 1 + explained in context: On 30 January 1933, President Hindenburg appointed Hitler Chancellor after being persuaded by Franz von Papen, who believed Hitler could be controlled by surrounding him with conservative ministers. Without their political backing, Hitler would not have become Chancellor despite being leader of the largest party in the Reichstag. Inference 2 + explained in context: Von Papen famously believed that Hitler could be "boxed in" by conservative ministers. However, within months Hitler exploited the Reichstag Fire, passed the Enabling Act, eliminated political opposition and sidelined both Hindenburg and von Papen, proving that they had seriously misjudged him.	4-5m

d)	Study Sources E and F. Does Source E prove that Source F is right about the Night of the Long Knives? Explain your answer.	6m
L1	Inference unsupported/ misinterpretation/describes source only.	1m
L2	Proves/does not prove through limited analysis of provenance/weak purpose	2-3m
L3	Proves/does not prove, content analysis, supported with source evidence. (Award 3m only for weak explanation and 4m for a well-explained answer). Source E proves that Source F is right because... Both sources agree that Hitler removed Röhm and the SA because they posed a threat to Germany. - Source E states that Hitler "has saved his country" and "delivered Germany from men who had become a danger to the unity of the German people and to the order of the state." This suggests that Hitler believed the SA had become a serious threat that needed to be eliminated. - Source F similarly explains that "Göring, Goebbels and Himmler were concerned with the growing power of Röhm," while the SA "threatened the hereditary leadership of the Reichswehr" and promoted "a second revolution." It further states that Hitler "decided to act against Röhm and the SA" because he "could not take the risk of breaking with the conservative middle-class elements in the Reichswehr, industry, and the civil service." Source E does not prove that Source F is right because the sources disagree about Hitler's motives for carrying out the purge. - Source E portrays Hitler as acting selflessly for Germany's benefit, claiming that he "has saved his country" and that "Hitler's love of Germany has triumphed over private friendships." The source presents the executions as a patriotic and necessary act to protect national unity and public order. - Source F, however, presents a different explanation. It argues that Hitler acted mainly to protect his own political position by maintaining the support of powerful conservative groups. It explains that Hitler "could not take the risk of breaking with the conservative middle-class elements in the Reichswehr, industry, and the civil service." Rather than emphasising patriotism, Source F suggests the purge was a political calculation to secure the loyalty of the army and conservative elites.	3-4m
L4	Proves/does not prove content analysis, supported with source evidence and cross reference to CK or another reliable source/Background Information Award 5m for a well-developed answer (1 CR) L3 Proves+ contextual knowledge supports both sources. By 1934, the SA had grown to around three to four million members, far larger than the German Army. Röhm wanted the SA to replace the Reichswehr, alarming army leaders and conservative elites. Hitler therefore ordered the Night of the Long Knives on 30 June 1934 to remove Röhm and secure the loyalty of the army OR L3 Does not prove + contextual knowledge supports Source F's interpretation. Hitler needed the backing of the Reichswehr, whose leaders refused to accept Röhm's plan to merge the SA with the army. By eliminating Röhm and other SA	4-5m

	leaders, Hitler won the army's support, which later proved crucial when Hindenburg died in August 1934, allowing Hitler to combine the offices of President and Chancellor and become Führer.	
L5	Proves/does not prove purpose analysis/critical analysis of provenance. Award 5m only if evidence/impact is lacking. Source E does not prove that Source F is right because its purpose limits its reliability. Source E was published by The Daily Mail on 2 July 1934, immediately after the Night of the Long Knives. As a conservative British newspaper that was generally supportive of Hitler in the early 1930s and strongly anti-communist, it is expected that its purpose was to justify and praise Hitler's actions. This message is conveyed through highly positive language, describing Hitler as having "saved his country", "delivered Germany from men who had become a danger", and claiming that "Hitler's love of Germany has triumphed over private friendships." By presenting the purge as a patriotic act carried out for Germany's benefit, the source seeks to persuade its readers that Hitler's ruthless actions were necessary to restore order and stability/The intended impact was to reassure British readers that Hitler was a strong leader protecting Germany from disorder rather than condemning the killings. Due to this ulterior motive, Source E is unreliable and therefore, does not prove that Source F is right because its purpose is to defend Hitler's actions,	5-6m

e)	Study all the sources. “By 1934, Hitler had become the undisputed leader of Germany because of the Reichstag Fire.” How far do the sources support this view? Use the sources and your knowledge to explain your answer.	8m
L1	Inference unsupported or misreading of source	1m
L2	Yes or No, supported by valid source use. Students must explain the evidence provided from each source. Merely quoting evidence will result in the lowest mark in the band.	2-4m
L3	Yes and No, supported by valid source use. Award 5m for 1 yes and no and an additional mark for each subsequent valid source up to a maximum of 7m. Students must explain the evidence provided from each source. Merely quoting evidence will result in the lowest mark in the band. Sources agree, referring to Sources A and B Source A supports the view that the Reichstag Fire helped Hitler become the undisputed leader of Germany by 1934. The cartoon shows the Reichstag building burning in the background, while Hindenburg tells Hitler that the “Red Peril” is a “heaven-sent opportunity” and that “if you can’t be a dictator now, you never will be.” This suggests that Hitler could use fear of communism after the Reichstag Fire to increase his power. After the fire in February 1933, Hitler persuaded Hindenburg to pass the Reichstag Fire Decree, which suspended civil liberties and allowed the Nazis to arrest thousands of Communists and other political opponents. This weakened opposition and helped Hitler pass the Enabling Act in March 1933, giving him legal dictatorial powers. Therefore, Source A supports the view because it shows the Reichstag Fire as a turning point that gave Hitler the chance to move towards dictatorship. Source B supports the view that Hitler became the undisputed leader because of the Reichstag Fire. It states that the fire became the “excuse for the persecution of Communist and Social Democratic workers” and that “thousands” were arrested, while the Reichstag Fire Decree suspended the “essential basic rights” of the Weimar Constitution. This suggests that Hitler used the fire to crush political opposition and strengthen his control. The Reichstag Fire Decree suspended civil liberties and enabled the arrest of thousands of Communists, allowing Hitler to pass the Enabling Act in March 1933, which gave him dictatorial powers. Therefore, Source B supports the view that the Reichstag Fire was a key step in Hitler’s consolidation of power. Sources disagree with the statement C, D, E, F Source C does not support the view that Hitler became the undisputed leader because of the Reichstag Fire. Instead, the source suggests that Hitler gained support because he was seen as the “saviour from economic and social disaster,” the “unifier of the German people,” and the leader who restored Germany’s “honour abroad.” This implies that many Germans accepted Hitler because of his perceived achievements rather than the Reichstag Fire. Nazi propaganda promoted the “Hitler Myth”, while economic recovery through public works, rearmament and falling unemployment increased Hitler’s popularity. Therefore, the source suggests that	5-7m

	Hitler's growing public support, rather than the Reichstag Fire alone, contributed to his becoming Germany's undisputed leader. Source D does not support the view that Hitler became the undisputed leader because of the Reichstag Fire. Instead, the cartoon suggests that Hitler's rise to power depended on the support of President Hindenburg and von Papen, who are shown carrying Hitler on their shoulders. This implies that Hitler was able to gain and maintain power because conservative elites helped him, rather than through the Reichstag Fire alone. Hitler was appointed Chancellor by Hindenburg on 30 January 1933 after von Papen persuaded the President that Hitler could be controlled within a coalition government. Without their backing, Hitler would not have gained office in the first place. Therefore, Source D suggests that elite political support, rather than the Reichstag Fire, was a key reason why Hitler eventually became Germany's undisputed leader. Source E does not support the view that Hitler became the undisputed leader because of the Reichstag Fire. Instead, it suggests that Hitler strengthened his position through the Night of the Long Knives, praising him for having "saved his country" by removing those who threatened "the unity of the German people." This implies that Hitler became Germany's undisputed leader by eliminating rivals within the Nazi Party rather than because of the Reichstag Fire. During the Night of the Long Knives in June 1934, Hitler ordered the execution of Ernst Röhm and other SA leaders, reassuring the army and conservative elites of his leadership. Their support enabled Hitler to assume the position of Führer after Hindenburg's death in August 1934. Therefore, Source E suggests that the Night of the Long Knives, rather than the Reichstag Fire, was the more important reason why Hitler became Germany's undisputed leader by 1934. Source F does not support the view that Hitler became the undisputed leader because of the Reichstag Fire. Instead, it suggests that Hitler's position was secured by the Night of the Long Knives, as he decided to act against Röhm and the SA because they threatened the support of the army, industrialists and conservative elites. The source explains that Hitler "could not take the risk of breaking with the conservative middle-class elements in the Reichswehr, industry, and the civil service," showing that eliminating the SA was necessary to gain the backing of these influential groups. The purge of Röhm and other SA leaders in June 1934 won the loyalty of the army, which later swore an oath of allegiance to Hitler after Hindenburg's death in August 1934. Therefore, Source F suggests that Hitler became Germany's undisputed leader through the Night of the Long Knives and the support of key elites, rather than because of the Reichstag Fire alone.	
	For L2 and L3 award a bonus of 1m for use of <u>contextual knowledge</u> to question a source in relation to its reliability, sufficiency, etc. Source B is reliable because its account is supported by contextual knowledge. The source states that the Reichstag Fire became the excuse for the persecution of "Communist and Social Democratic workers" and that "thousands of people" were arrested. This agrees with historical evidence. Following the Reichstag Fire on 27 February 1933, Hitler persuaded Hindenburg to sign the Reichstag Fire Decree, which suspended civil liberties such as freedom of speech, assembly and	+!

	the press. OR However, Source B is lacking in sufficiency because it presents only one consequence of the Reichstag Fire and omits other important reasons why the event helped Hitler consolidate power. The source focuses almost entirely on the persecution of Communists and Social Democrats, stating that the fire became the "excuse for the persecution of Communist and Social Democratic workers" and that constitutional rights were removed. Contextual knowledge shows that the Reichstag Fire also enabled Hitler to strengthen his dictatorship in other ways. The Reichstag Fire Decree created an atmosphere of fear that intimidated voters before the March 1933 election, while the absence of Communist deputies made it easier for Hitler to secure enough support to pass the Enabling Act in March 1933, allowing him to make laws without Reichstag approval. These developments were crucial in establishing Hitler's dictatorship. Sources A,C or D could also be evaluated.	
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Essay LORMS (Levels of Response Marking Scheme)

Levels	Descriptors	Marks
L1	Identifies/Describes given or other reasons (Award 1 mark for identifying one reason, 2 marks for identifying 2 or more. Award 2 marks for describing one reason and 3 marks for describing 2 or more.)	1 – 3 marks
L2	Explains given reason OR other reasons (Award 4 marks for an explanation of given reason OR other reason, and an additional mark for additional reasons/ supporting detail, to a maximum of 5 marks.)	4 – 5 marks
L3	Explains given reason AND other reasons (Award 6 marks for an explanation of given AND other reason, and additional mark(s) for further supporting detail or reason, to a maximum of 8 marks (which include given reason).	6 - 8 marks
	Award an additional 2 marks (to a maximum of 10 marks) for a balanced conclusion based on an explicit consideration of <u>the relative importance of different reasons</u>. The total marks to be awarded for the response will be based on marks obtained at L3 + 2 bonus marks: i.e. L3/6+2; L3/7+2; L3/8+2).	
	i.e. for L3 Explains given reason AND other reasons Response can get up to 8 marks through two routes. (a) 2 explained reasons that are well-developed with depth of treatment OR (b) 3 explained reasons - with breadth of coverage but less depth of treatment Valid Evaluation •Award additional 2 marks •Total marks to be awarded: Marks obtained at L3 + 2 bonus marks	

2) 'The introduction of the British Residential System was the main reason why the people of Malaya welcomed British colonial rule.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

I agree with this statement to some extent. The British Residential System helped bring order and effective administration to Malaya, which made British rule more acceptable. However, many people welcomed British rule because it brought peace and stability, created economic opportunities, and benefited Malay rulers and aristocrats. Of these factors, the restoration of peace and stability was the most important reason why British rule was generally accepted.

First, the introduction of the British Residential System encouraged acceptance of British rule. Under this system, a British Resident advised the Sultan on all matters except Malay religion and customs. The system aimed to restore law and order, improve administration, and develop the economy. Although the Sultan remained the ruler in name, the Resident introduced reforms that improved governance and revenue collection. As a result, many people saw the British as bringing more efficient administration to the Malay states. However, the system was not universally welcomed, as shown by the opposition to James Birch in Perak.

Second, peace and stability were the most important reasons why many people accepted British rule. Before British intervention, several Malay states suffered from succession disputes, conflicts between secret societies, and fighting among Chinese mining groups. These disturbances disrupted trade and daily life. One of the main duties of the Resident was to restore law and order, and British intervention largely succeeded in ending these conflicts. Merchants, miners, and ordinary people benefited from the resulting stability, making them more willing to accept British rule.

Third, British rule created economic opportunities and prosperity. The British developed the tin and rubber industries, attracted foreign investment, and built roads, railways, and other infrastructure. Malaya became one of the world's leading producers of tin and rubber, creating employment and business opportunities. Chinese merchants benefited from commercial activities, while many workers found jobs in mines, plantations, and towns. Economic growth therefore encouraged many groups to view British rule positively.

Finally, many Malay rulers and aristocrats welcomed British rule because it protected their positions and interests. Although the Sultans lost some administrative powers, the British continued to recognise their status and authority in matters concerning Malay religion and customs. The British also respected Malay traditions and often maintained good relations with the rulers. Many aristocrats received Western education and gained access to government positions, allowing them to preserve their influence and wealth. As a result, they had little reason to oppose British rule.

In conclusion, the Residential System was an important reason why British rule was accepted because it improved administration and governance. However, the system itself would not have been welcomed if it had failed to deliver results. Compared to the Residential System, the restoration of peace and stability was more significant because it directly addressed the disorder that had troubled many Malay states before British intervention. Economic prosperity and the cooperation of Malay rulers also strengthened support for British rule. Therefore, I only partly agree with the statement; peace and stability were ultimately the most important reasons why many people in Malaya welcomed British colonial rule.

3) 'The main aim of the Treaty of Versailles was to prevent another war from breaking out in Europe.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

I agree with this statement to a large extent. One of the main aims of the Treaty of Versailles was to prevent Germany from starting another war. However, the treaty was also shaped by the desire to punish Germany, obtain compensation for wartime damage, and satisfy the different aims of the Allied leaders. Of these factors, the desire to prevent another war was the most important because it influenced many of the treaty's key terms.

First, the peacemakers wanted to prevent another war from breaking out in Europe. Many leaders believed that Germany's military power had been responsible for World War I and that Germany needed to be weakened to ensure future peace. As a result, the treaty imposed strict military restrictions on Germany. The German army was limited to 100,000 men, conscription was banned, and Germany was not allowed tanks, submarines, or an air force. The Rhineland was also demilitarised to protect France from future invasion. These measures were designed to prevent Germany from becoming a military threat again and show that maintaining peace was a major aim of the treaty.

Second, the treaty was influenced by the desire to punish Germany. Many people in Britain and France blamed Germany for the suffering and destruction caused by the war. As a result, Germany was forced to accept the War Guilt Clause (Article 231), which stated that Germany was responsible for the war. Germany also lost territory and colonies, including Alsace-Lorraine to France and all its overseas colonies. These terms reflected a strong desire for revenge and punishment, particularly from France, which had suffered heavy losses during the war.

Third, the Allies wanted Germany to compensate for the damage caused by the war. The treaty required Germany to pay reparations of £6.6 billion. France especially wanted compensation because large areas of northern France had been devastated during the fighting. The reparations were intended to help rebuild damaged regions and support countries that had suffered economically during the war. This shows that financial compensation was another important objective of the treaty.

Finally, the treaty reflected the different aims of the Allied leaders. French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau wanted Germany severely weakened to ensure France's security. British Prime Minister David Lloyd George wanted Germany punished but not destroyed, as Germany remained an important trading partner. Meanwhile, US President Woodrow Wilson promoted a fairer peace based on his Fourteen Points, including self-determination and the creation of the League of Nations. The final treaty was therefore a compromise between these competing aims.

In conclusion, while the Treaty of Versailles reflected demands for revenge and compensation, these objectives were secondary to the broader goal of securing peace. The harsh treatment of Germany was largely motivated by fears of future German aggression rather than punishment alone. Therefore, although compensation and the aims of leaders such as Clemenceau and Lloyd George influenced the final settlement, the desire to prevent another war was the factor that most strongly shaped the treaty's key terms. Consequently, I largely agree with the statement.

'The USA was responsible for the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

I agree with this statement to some extent. American actions, particularly economic sanctions and the oil embargo imposed on Japan, contributed to the attack on Pearl Harbor. However, Japan's expansionist ambitions, its desire to secure resources in Southeast Asia, and the influence of militarists within the Japanese government were also important causes. Of these factors, Japan's desire to build and defend its empire was the most significant reason for the attack.

First, the USA contributed to the attack through its economic pressure on Japan. During the 1930s, Japan expanded aggressively into China and later into French Indochina. In response, the United States imposed a series of economic sanctions, culminating in an oil embargo in July 1941. Since Japan imported around 80% of its oil from the USA, the embargo threatened its economy and military operations. Japanese leaders feared that without oil supplies, Japan would be unable to continue its expansion or defend its interests. As a result, some Japanese leaders concluded that war with the USA was unavoidable. Therefore, American actions played a role in provoking the attack.

Second, Japan's desire to secure resources was a major cause of the attack. Japan lacked many natural resources, especially oil, rubber, and tin. To overcome this problem, it sought to establish a self-sufficient empire known as the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Southeast Asia contained many of the resources Japan needed, particularly the oil fields of the Dutch East Indies. However, Japanese leaders believed that the US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor could interfere with these plans. The attack was therefore intended to eliminate this threat and allow Japan to seize resource-rich territories.

Third, Japanese militarism was an important factor. By the late 1930s, the military dominated Japanese politics. Many military leaders believed that Japan had a destiny to become the leading power in Asia and that military expansion was necessary to achieve this goal. They viewed compromise with the United States as a sign of weakness and supported decisive military action. This aggressive mindset encouraged Japan to choose war rather than diplomacy.

Fourth, Japan's expansionist ambitions and growing tensions with the USA made conflict increasingly likely. Since invading Manchuria in 1931 and China in 1937, Japan had pursued territorial expansion across Asia. The United States strongly opposed this expansion and supported China economically. Relations between the two countries deteriorated steadily throughout the 1930s and early 1940s. By 1941, both sides viewed each other with increasing suspicion, making war more probable.

In conclusion, responsibility for Pearl Harbor cannot be attributed solely to the USA. While the oil embargo placed Japan under severe pressure and helped convince Japanese leaders that war might be necessary, it was Japan's long-standing ambition to create a regional empire and the influence of militarists that made military action seem preferable to compromise. As a result, American sanctions acted more as a trigger than a root cause. Therefore, I only partly agree with the statement; Japan's expansionist aims were the most important reason for the attack. OR

In conclusion, both American and Japanese actions contributed to the attack on Pearl Harbor. The USA's sanctions undoubtedly increased tensions and accelerated Japan's decision to go to war. However, these measures were largely a response to Japan's aggression in China and Southeast Asia. Since Japan's desire for resources and territorial expansion preceded the sanctions and ultimately drove its decision-making, these factors were more important than American actions. Therefore, while the USA bears some responsibility, Japan's expansionist ambitions were the primary cause of the attack.