

Chapter 8 sample exam-style questions with sample answers

SOURCE A

A wartime German poster calling for people to hand in their scrap metal. The text reads: *There is enough aluminium, copper, brass, nickel, tin in the country! Hand it over – the army needs it!*



SOURCE B

From an official document presented to the British Cabinet, 1 January 1917

CONFIDENTIAL.

MEMORANDUM IN REGARD TO THE PRESENT POSITION
OF THE BLOCKADE, JANUARY 1st, 1917.

All the evidence available tends to show that, with some minor exceptions, practically no goods coming from overseas are getting through to Germany. For this purpose, fish caught by any of the northern neutrals and landed in a northern country is regarded rather in the light of home produce than in that of goods from overseas. The chief minor exceptions are certain colonial goods, such as tobacco, coffee, and cinchona from the Dutch colonies, and wines and spirits, as to which we have had a good deal of difficulty with the French.

Exam-style questions with sample answers

1. Study Source A.

What can you tell from this source about the impact of the blockade on Germany? Support your answer with reference to the source. (6)

The source suggests that the blockade was having an impact on Germany's ability to fight the war, as it contributed to a shortage of metals needed for weapons and other vital equipment. The poster implies that the blockade did not just affect the supply of food to the German population, as the figure is pleading for metallic materials. It also suggests that the German government had to resort to public appeals such as the one in the poster asking people to give up metal items which would then be melted into materials for the war effort.

2. Study Source B.

How far does this source show that the blockade was successful in cutting off supplies to Germany? Explain your answer. (7)

On the one hand the source suggests that by the start of 1917 the blockade was successful in cutting off supplies, as it mentions the inability of Germany to import goods from abroad by saying that "practically no goods are getting through to Germany".

However, it also indicates that the blockade had not been completely successful as it mentions the difficulty in preventing fish caught in northern countries arriving in Germany.

Overall, by January 1917 the British blockade appeared to have been very successful in depriving Germany of key foodstuffs, something which the language and tone of Source B makes very clear.

3. Study both sources.

Is one of these sources more useful than the other as evidence about the impact of the blockade on Germany? Explain your answer. (7)

These sources are both useful, but also limited. Source A's content makes it very useful as it illustrates the shortages of important metal materials in Germany, which clearly had a significant impact on the country's war effort. Its provenance also adds to its use as it is a government poster from during the war published to encourage the German people to give up their metal goods for the war effort. There is no attempt to exaggerate the message or scale of the crisis.

Source B is also very informative about the impact of the blockade so is also very useful. It provides a detailed account of the blockade's impact on Germany, mentioning specific countries and items. This content appears to support the message of Source A, which suggests a shortage of materials in Germany. As this was a secret document prepared for the British Cabinet, we can be reasonably confident that there is no attempt to exaggerate the impact as this would possibly lead the government into having a false sense of optimism about the blockade's impact.

However, Source A's usefulness is undermined by its focus only in metal goods. No mention is made of the food shortages, nor where and from whom the blockade hit hardest. There seems to be an attempt by the government to downplay the impact of the shortages as they portray the sack full of treasure, suggesting that Germany was in a position to replenish its metal stocks from its civilian population.

Source B could also be seen as limited in its usefulness, as it only provides a brief snapshot of the blockade's impact in January 1917: the war still had nearly 2 years left to run. Furthermore, it does not mention the actual impact on Germany of the blockade, merely the success in stopping many goods getting through.

Overall, Source B has greater use to a historian looking at the blockade's impact, as it identifies the successes and failings of the blockade and provides a detailed commentary. Furthermore, as it is supported by Source A and is a confidential memo for the government, its provenance adds to its use.

4. Who were the 'Doughboys'? (2)

The 'Doughboys' were the American soldiers who entered the war in April 1917. The term originally comes from the design of their cap which resembled that of a baker.

5. (i) Describe the role of women in the war. (4)

Women had a varied role in the war. For a number of women, the war meant they had to replace men who had gone off to fight in traditional male jobs such as factory work, farming or working on trams. Women were also expected to work on the land, and in Britain the Women's Land Army was established in 1918, which recruited 250,000 women. In Russia, some women were even allowed to create a combat unit, called the 'Amazon' Regiment. Even though other countries did not allow women to fight, they relied on women to do the bulk of nursing work close to the front line.

(ii) Why did Ludendorff launch Operation Michael in March 1918? (6)

The most important reason that Ludendorff launched Operation Michael in 1918 was that he believed the entry of the USA into the war on the Entente side meant Germany's defeat was inevitable if she continued with her defensive strategy. Therefore he believed that Germany had to launch a major offensive before US troops arrived in large number, and whilst Germany had a brief numerical advantage, caused by the Russian withdrawal.

A further reason was that Ludendorff knew that Germany could not win the war and therefore hoped to gain a stronger negotiating position by pushing the Entente powers back in one final offensive. He knew that Britain and France had suffered huge casualties during the 1917 Ypres and Nivelle offensives and believed that they would accept peace terms after a large German offensive.

A final reason is that Ludendorff realised that after the cumulative effects of the Somme and Passchendaele offensives, Germany could not win a war of attrition and therefore decided to use a new form of mobile warfare to destroy the British forces in the north.

- (iii) How far was the battle of Jutland a victory for Great Britain?
Explain your answer. (10)

On the one hand, the battle of Jutland was a clear defeat for the British. Admiral Beatty's plan to destroy the German High Seas fleet clearly failed as Scheer's fleet was able to make it back to port, with the British fearing a torpedo attack. A comparison of losses also suggests it was a German victory with the German fleet losing one battle cruiser, one pre-Dreadnought, four light cruisers and five destroyers, while the British lost three battle cruisers, four armoured cruisers, and eight destroyers.

However, when placed in the context of the war as a whole, the battle was a significant victory for Britain. The German High Seas Fleet never came out of port again after the battle, giving Britain complete freedom of the North Sea, which in turn allowed her to sustain her crippling blockade of Germany. Furthermore, whilst the Germans did not lose as many ships, a great many of her heavy destroyers were badly damaged during the battle, allowing Britain to maintain her dominance in this class of warship.

On balance, the battle was a costly draw for both sides. However, the effects of a costly draw were more damaging for Germany and, as a result, they decided to keep their fleet in port for the remainder of the war.