

The '2 source' question

16 marks

How much do [sources] reveal about differing interpretations of... The two-source question (16 marks)

What is it asking?

Asking candidates to establish the views of two sources, making a judgement of the quality of each source's interpretation of a specific issue.

Candidates should

- ◆ **identify and explain the main interpretations** of the two sources (three clear points from each source)
- ◆ develop the source points/interpretations by introducing the **wider context** (i.e. relevant recall)
- ◆ introduce **recalled knowledge** to contextualise the content/interpretations of the sources.
- ◆ Include **relevant historiography** and/or comment on the provenance of the sources.

How much so [sources] reveal about differing interpretations of...?

Assertion (Quantitative)

Interpretation of First Source: 3 marks

◆ Overall view

Then three points of detailed evidence

1

2

3

Interpretation of Second of Source; 3 marks

◆ Overall view

Then three points of detailed evidence

1

2

3

WCD: 8 marks

Historians' Views: 2 marks



Germany: From Democracy to Dictatorship, 1918-1939

SOURCE A is from Gustav Stresemann's address to the foreign press, October 1925.

Yet I am convinced on one thing... that the progress of mankind can only be founded on the idea of peace and that this alone can capture men's hearts. This conviction stems from my own personal experience and knowledge of European politics. I am also certain that those leaders who approved the policy leading to Locarno do so still, and that the achievements of Locarno must remain the basis for future foreign policy...Locarno and all the agreements relating to it, including the various arbitration treaties, offered a way which we chose deliberately, believing that the portion of the globe which we inhabit was condemned to sterility unless the road to peace can be found... I believe that the spirit of these agreements is far more important than the text itself.

SOURCE B is from *The Illusion of Peace* by Sally Marks (1976)

It is often said that a diplomat must lie for his country and Stresemann was a superlative liar, dispensing total untruths to the Entente (Britain and France), the German people and his diary with even-handed aplomb [coolness]. He had substantial political difficulties, as the German left distrusted his conservative past and the German right thought he was conceding too much to the Entente. Stresemann made the most of these to gain foreign concessions. Entente leaders, anxious to keep in office this 'good European', who was in fact a great German nationalist, generally gave way.

Stresemann invariably had a list of concessions to Germany necessary to achieve the pacification of Europe. Stresemann gained most of his list, and no man in the Weimar Republic did more to destroy the Versailles Treaty.

How much do **Sources A** and **B** reveal about differing interpretations of the **motives** behind the foreign policy of Gustav Stresemann?

Example of: Judgement (1) /overall comparison

Sources A and B reveal differing interpretations of Stresemann's motives very well. Source B suggests that Stresemann was **motivated by the desire to be a good European**, whereas source C suggests that in fact he was **“a great German nationalist”**.

Example of: Interpretation of source A (1)

In Source A Stresemann says that “the progress of mankind can only be founded on the idea of peace.” This suggests that Stresemann, in his foreign policy, **was motivated by a desire to have good, peaceful relations with other countries** rather than war so he was presenting himself as a good internationalist.

Interpretation of source A (2)

In Source A Stresemann also says that “the achievements of Locarno must remain the basis for future foreign policy”. This shows that Stresemann’s foreign policy **was motivated, mainly, by his desire to cultivate good relations with France in particular** because, historically, since 1871 France and Germany had been great rivals. Again this shows that he was trying to be a good European by reducing Franco-German tension as a key priority.

Interpretation of source A (3)

Finally, in Source A, Stresemann says “the spirit” of agreements like Locarno was more important than the text. This shows that Stresemann is claiming that the **cooperation that led to agreement such as the Locarno Treaty is more important** than the actual detail.

Interpretation of source B (1)

On the other hand...

In Source B Marks says that “a diplomat must lie for his country and Stresemann was a superlative liar”. This suggests that whatever Stresemann said publically about his desire to be a good European he was really **motivated by a desire to advance Germany’s interests**, by lying if necessary.

Interpretation of Source B (2)

Furthermore, in Source B Marks says that Stresemann had substantial political difficulties... at home and made the most of these to gain foreign concessions. He pressurised the Allies (who wanted to keep him in office) by saying that if he was not successful in his foreign policy then he would be kicked out of office. This suggests that Stresemann's foreign policy was **motivated by resolving issues on a national level and not achieving peace in Europe.**

Interpretation of Source B (3)

Finally, in Source B Marks says “no man in the Weimar Republic did more to destroy the Versailles Treaty.” This shows that his foreign policy was **fuelled by the desire to please the German people through destroying the Versailles treaty**, which they hated, and which was an international Treaty so he was in fact a nationalist first and foremost.

Judgement (2)

However, Sources B and C leave out important illustrations of the debate about the motives behind Stresemann's foreign policy.

Example of: Wider Contextual Development

The Sources make no mention either of the fact that the **Locarno Pact** (1925) was an international treaty which fixed the western borders of Germany, thereby ensuring Franco-German relations and maintaining peace highlighting Stresemann's good Europeanism. It could be argued that Locarno is the **best example of Stresemann's motives because it shows that he was happy to sacrifice German interests to please France.** (WCD)

Yet Locarno left open the question of Germany's eastern borders and so left open the question of future German expansion eastwards – **traditional nationalist ambition.** (WCD)

Wider Contextual Development

The Sources make no mention of the efforts of Stresemann to involve Germany in the **League of Nations** (1926). Since the League was an international organisation based on the principle of collective security, it could be argued that **Stresemann was motivated by the desire to achieve international peace.** (WCD)

Equally, it could also be argued that his demand that German entry to the League would be conditional on Germany becoming a veto power and have a permanent seat of n the Council shows that he was a **nationalist in his approach to the League.** (WCD)

Wider Contextual Development

The Sources also fail to mention the **Dawes Plan (1924)** and the **Young Plan (1929)**. These were international agreements designed to organise the reparations payments to the Allies in order to ensure that peaceful relations between Germany and the Allies were maintained. This was the policy of fulfilment. It could be argued that this shows that **in his approach to the Treaty of Versailles, Stresemann was motivated by the desire to maintain good relation with the Allies.** (WCD)

Yet again, however, it could be argued that Dawes and Young involved revision of Versailles in Germany's favour so Stresemann was in fact operating a policy of *erfüllungspolitik* **in order to win terms favourable to Germany first.** (WCD)

Wider Contextual Development

Furthermore, the Sources do not mention Stresemann's pursuit of disarmament. In 1928 he signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact. This was an international agreement which meant to prevent future wars by limiting arms throughout the world. It could be argued that Stresemann signed this pact because he was **motivated by the desire to achieve permanent world peace.** (WCD) But he also signed the Treaty of Berlin (1926) which had secret clauses allowing the German army to train in Russia and try out new weaponry there **so on the question of armaments he was in fact a nationalist.** (WCD)

Example of: Historians' views

Henig argues that **Stresemann was a good European**, in some respects, whose foreign policy was increasingly criticised in Germany, especially by the right, because of the limited nature of its gains for Germany.

Historians' views

Lee argues that Stresemann was **motivated both by a wish to be a good European and to advance the interests of Germany** and that his foreign policy could be described as pragmatic or realist nationalism.